

THE
old Commodore
VOL - 2

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THE OLD COMMODORE



“ Each talks aloud, or in some secret place,
And wild Impatience stared in ev’ry face.
The flying rumour gather’d as it roll’d,
The awful tale no sooner heard than told ;
And all who told it added something new,
And all who heard it made enlargements too,
In every ear it spread, on every tongue it grew.”

FORTUNATELY for Lady Astell, and very unfortunately for our gouty friend on board the Terrific, that very evening the King, having dined heartily at four o’clock, upon roast leg of mutton, eschewing the fat, Sir Rigglesby Wippersnap, a very old courtier, and a great crony of both the sovereigns, called in.

THE OLD COMMODORE.

As Sir Rigglesby never asked for any office, and was never known to give an opinion that was not an echo, he had the *entrée* of the back-stairs at all reasonable hours. Royal, like common minds, require *delassement*. The candles were lighted; the 'tittle-tattle' of the day dispatched, and Sir Rigglesby, in conformity with the royal wish, took the dummy at long whist, for sixpence a rub, against their Majesties. Having lost and paid for the first rub, and asseverating that it was impossible to succeed against so much combined skill, as he was slowly, very slowly, shuffling the cards, as if unwilling to risk another sixpence, he thus relieved, by speech, the tedium of his operation.

“Has your Majesty heard—hi—hi—of the foolish pretensions of that, that, Sir Octavius Bacuissart—presumptuous, and all that—”

“Deal, deal, Rigglesby—I see, cut, cut, cut.”

“Not the Commodore, please your Majesty

—hi—hi—wicked of me to joke in the presence of sacred majesty—ho, ho !”

“ Cut, cut,—cut the old Commodore—have though—singular that—how did you know it, know, know, know it ?”

“ Please your Majesty, I did not know it—could your Majesty believe it ?” turning to the Queen, “ hi—hi—the old vulgar—” and seeing that a little abuse would not be reprehended, he went on cautiously—“ ill-bred, disloyal, brute, has again threatened—ho, ho, ho—to come to court, before all the ladies—hum—bad—with, ho—without—quite indecent.”

The four royal eyes opened expressively wide, and “ what, where, how, when ?” came down in a plentiful shower.

“ Why, may it please your Majesties, he boasts of possessing—hi, hi !—an hereditary privilege, under the sign manual of Henry V. your royal ancestor,” (rather a courtly stretch,) “ to come to court wherever your Majesty may hold one, or whenever your Majesty may be

dining, and claim a manchet of the best bread, and one stoup of wine of a five-hooped stoup—”

“ What, what, what,—munch up my bread, and stoop, stoop, stoop, and drink my wine ! Nonsense, Rigglesby, nonsense.”

“ Ah, your gracious Majesty,” said Sir Rigglesby, laying his hand pathetically on his left breast, and drawing up a sigh with as much difficulty as if it were the bucket of a hundred-feet deep well, “ your Majesty may please to understand he may come into your royal presence any day between the feast of St. Cuthberth of Lindisfarne and the feast of St. Edmund, and eat the bread and drink the wine off your royal dining-table without leave or licence—ho ! ho ! oh !”

“ No, no, no, Rigglesby—mustn’t do that —mustn’t do that. The De Courcys coming in with their hats on, bad enough—too bad ; eat my wine, drink my bread ! No, no, no. Ycomen of the guard ; Bow-street runners.”

“ Ah, sire, would to heaven that was the worst of it ! This same Baronet—he he—says

he's entitled to come to court any day between sun and sun, between the aforesaid feast of St. Cuthberth of Lindisfarne and the feast of St. Edmund, in such a way, only think, it would make all the ladies of the court blush. O fie!"

“ Would it, would it?—it must be atrocious—atrocious,—what *all blush*! bad! bad! quite revolutionary.”

“ Would your gracious Majesty be pleased to condescend to guess how—hi hi!”

“ Without shoes or stockings, perhaps,” said the unsophisticated monarch. The Queen called for her vinaigrette. The Queen's young page pinched the arm of the maid of honour, and the maid of honour gave out the daintiest little shriek imaginable. The crisis was growing awful, and Sir Rigglesby grew every moment more solemn and more important. At length, he said, with a very graceful horror, “ May it please your Majesty, he dares rebelliously to carry his disloyalty higher than that.”

Those sovereign lips that awed the world

deigned to purse themselves up into a well-defined circle, and marshal the regal breath as it passed them into a low whistle; and albeit, a somewhat merry one. That the royal mind was tickled, we cannot presume to say; but we may fairly presume that the royal nose was, for it was considerably rubbed by the forefinger of the royal right-hand.

But the Queen was still to be enlightened. She asked Sir Rigglesby, in her pretty German-English, which we are too respectfully loyal to imitate, how it was that this barbarous Commodore was to come to her court—the most decorous, the best regulated, and chastest court in Christendom. After a deal of circumlocution, her Majesty at length understood, that from the time of the fifth Harry, the head of the family of Bacuissart claimed the privilege of coming to court not much more alarmingly dressed than an officer of the Highland regiments, a privilege that it was at the option of the Baronet to permit royalty to buy off from

year to year, but which might be exerted at any time, if the permission were not given to redeem it.

Everybody who has the least tinge of philosophy must know that what such a convulsion as an earthquake is to the mountain, this news was to the court. It was something awful, indistinct, incomprehensible. The elderly ladies, especially, felt their grey hairs stiffen, and their indignant stomachs rise high over their scraggy throats. The news flew like the combustion of a train of gunpowder through every avenue of the palace: cooks, scullions, and scullions'-assistants, each received and commented on the astounding intelligence; and, what with commentaries, additions, and versions, when the rumour reached the sentinels at the different outlets of the palace, it had increased to the terrifying announcement that the mutiny of the *Nore* had been revived, and that the fighting old Commodore was coming up to St. James's with a petition for redress of grievances, fifteen yards

long, at the head of his barge's crew, all of them in an Adamite state.

This report having circulated through the guard-room was, as it ought to have been, returned to the interior of the palace through the avenues by which it had issued, very much amended. The whole ship's company of the Terrific was on their way to court, girt round with cabbage-leaves — why and wherefore we must leave to naturalists to explain; they were to be met at Temple Bar by a cockney-mob, who were to parade before them, a loaf steeped in blood, at the top of a pole thirty feet long.

These were, truly, times of great excitement.

At all this our sensible monarch was highly amused. He had some recollection of Sir Octavius Bacuissart having one day, at Portsmouth, for some impetence on the part of Sir Rigglesby, knocked him into the kennel with one hand, and then hooked him out, when

half suffocated, by the other hand—"if hand that could be called, which hand was not." So his Majesty, before reverting to the very strange claim that the courtier avowed the old Commodore was going to put forward, asked him to relate the whole of this anecdote. The hanger-on made as great a mess of it as the old Commodore had made of him when he rolled him in the mud. The King was satisfied if Sir Rigglesby was not; and the whist party shortly after broke up without the conveyancer of scandal scoring many for honours.

CHAPTER II.

“Obliging sir, for courts you sure were made ;
Why should such virtue ever seek the shade ?
The king would smile on you—at least the queen.”
Ah, gentle sir, you courtiers so cajole us,
But Tully has it, “Nunquam minus solus.”

I LOVE the constitution, I honour its feudal origin. Its blemishes are, to me, beauty-spots ; its rottenness is, to me, the quintessence of the freshest perfumes. I honour feudal services, and gloat over the nice distinctions of a nobleman's, a knight's, and a franklin's fee. I look upon those as the most distinguished families in whom are vested those imperishable and inalienable rights of holding the towel whilst his Majesty washes his sacred hands, the more

especially, if the other blessed privilege be appended, of possessing three or four extensive manors with right of vert and venison. Can new-fangled America show anything so dignified, so awe-instilling, as a custom handed down from the remotest antiquity, of being permitted to strew the King's bed-chamber with clean rushes? No; these rights, and such as these, are the foundation stones, the crystal bases of our glorious monarchy, and of our inimitable constitution, the admiration and the envy of surrounding nations.

I dare not trust myself further on this subject. I shall grow too eloquent. My modesty would be shocked by finding myself quoted, or rather pirated, by young members of parliament in their maiden speeches. I must forbear.

Towards night, his gracious Majesty became aware of the increasing excitement through the palace, and was determined himself to examine whether there could be any foundation for a report so very absurd. Consequently, at about ten

o'clock that evening, a very late hour for a man of his regular habits, he sent for one of the heads of his colleges of heraldry. Who it was that obeyed the royal summons I know not, whether Garter king-at-arms, or Rouge-croix, Norroy, or Clarencieux. However, he was a man of much breath, and of an infinite coinage of words, and so fond of repetitions, that he only mortally hated those things upon earth, which can utter sounds of only one note, as they competed with him in pertinacity in the saying the same thing over again. With such a man, precedent was his god, and antiquity gave him his ritual of worship. To him, therefore, the King made known his fears, and ordered him to search the records belonging to the courts of privileges, and discover if any such right existed, so contrary *ad bonos mores*.

The tabarded official most submissively replied, "That if such right existed, and had been granted, and registered, it could not, whatever it was, by any possibility be *contra bonos mores*."

“What—what—what—if a man claims a right to—to—to—?”

“May it please your Majesty, it may be most offensive to your Majesty as an individual, but must be regarded as the most grateful incense to your sacred Majesty, in your character of the fountain of all honour, the font of all chivalry, and the well-spring of life of all nobility.”

“Well, well—go look—go look; sha’n’t do it, however.”

So the man learned in genealogies, and all puissant in etiquette, having received the necessary instructions, retired. His Britannic Majesty passed a most uncomfortable night, dreaming all through it, that he had been metamorphosed successively into the corner of every street, leading in the line from the Royal Exchange to Charing Cross inclusive, of his royal cities of London and Westminster. Dreams have strange associations, and Shakspeare was right when he said,

“ Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,”

notwithstanding the manifold virtues that reside in a linsey-woolsey night-cap.

Very early the next day, the king of all, and the king-at-arms, were closeted together. The former very much annoyed, the latter very much elated, for the herald had discovered a charge, of at least three hundred years old, upon the King's manor of Falconditch, of forty shillings annually, paid to the steward of the manor of Trestletree, that his lord, the lord of the said manor, should not, for the space of one year, claim or exert his right of;—but we will quote the excellent latin in which the right was expressed—*Intrandi in conspectu regis, et suæ reginæ, et suæ regiæ, dominis proceribus presentibus, sine indusia, braceis, femoraliis, cuissibus aut ullis vestibus à puppi.*

“ By my three kingdoms,” said his Majesty, with orb-like eyes, “ I understand only the two last words, ‘ a puppy,’—yes, yes, yes—and a most impudent puppy he must be.”

“ With all submission, I humbly take it, may it please your Majesty, that *à puppi* is figuratively used for the *portica*—hum!—that is to say, for some eminent service rendered to Henry V. of blessed and glorious memory, by an ancestor of Sir Octavius Bacuissart, his lineal descendants have a right of entrance, at seasonable hours, into your royal presence, palace, and court, without any of that part of the dress of a gentleman which renders knee-buckles needful.”

“ And do you think this right is a good right?”

“ Indubitably, your Majesty. Your Majesty and your royal ancestors have, for three centuries, been paying yearly forty shillings, that this right may not be exercised; and it is at the option of Sir Octavius whether he will next year take his forty shillings or walk into your royal presence when your Majesty is at dinner, drink your wine, and eat your bread, as naked from the waist downwards as a mermaid.”

“Odd fish! Old Commodore! We’ll talk to my Lord Chancellor.”

“Of no use, your Majesty. The right stands upon a better basis than the law of the land.”

“We’ll quash it, however, by an order in council.”

“With all submission, your Majesty, it is a fundamental part of the constitution.”

“We’ll suppress it by our royal prerogative,” said the King, looking magnificent.

“With all submission, may it please your Majesty,” said the arbiter of precedent, quite doggedly, “you may as well think of altering the succession.”

“We’ll get us an act of parliament, man—we’ll get us an act of parliament.”

“An act of parliament, Sire, is—an act of parliament: but I have even my doubts upon that.”

“Get out of the room with you for a fool. An act of parliament, Sir Mouldy, can do any-

thing, especially when anything more than commonly ridiculous is to be done."

An hour after, the King said to the Queen, "I have been thinking, madam, that Sir Octavius Bacuissart has behaved unlike an officer and a gentleman. He has no business to make a breach in the constitution by forcing a young nobleman, one of the pillars of the state, to drown himself. He shall be superseded immediately."

"Will he come to court?"

"If he dares to come in a state fit for the halberds, by this thing and that, I solemnly swear he shall be tied up to them, and receive six dozen himself."

Nobly said for the head of a limited monarchy.

Whether this resolve was communicated to the Commodore or not, I cannot tell. I only know that he was immediately superseded; that he never put the threat into execution that he made at the Admiralty; but, with feelings about as miserable as are those of a hackney-

coach-horse that has been out all day in the rain, he went down to Trestletree Hall, continued to take his forty shillings from the king's manor of Falconditch, and never once seemed disposed to come to court, with or without his continuations.

With the deepest feelings of regret I must now take leave of my life as a courtier, and shall merely say, that it was long before all the old women in and about St. James's could fully recover themselves from the shock that the threatened avatar of the old Commodore *in naturalibus* had administered to them, and that, it caused quite as much sensation as did the universal shaving of the heads of the household, consequent upon the *pediculous* intrusion upon the sacred plate of Majesty.

As, by this time, we trust that everything relating to the Commodore has become interesting, and as we did not wish to tax the prolixity of Sir Mouldy Vertandor, the king-at-arms, for his version of the affair, we will briefly

record by what means the male representatives of the family of Bacuissart became possessed of their singular right of emulating the Highlanders in their kilts and philibegs.

It is always the best, after you have beaten your enemy, to take, if you can get it, his own account of the affair. I shall not, therefore, make a new version of the battle of Azincourt, but only detail so much of it as bears upon the history of the old Commodore's singular privilege.

Rapin tells us, that the English, "malades, pour la plupart de la dyssentérie, qui les n'avoit point quittez depuis leur depart d'Harfleur," were "la plupart d'entre eux reduits à la nécessité de combattre *tous nuds de la ceinture en bas* à la cause de cette maladie qui les presse."

So much for the general state of the combatants; and now we must have recourse to old Monstrelet for the particular part that the renowned Thomas Epinhen, the fighting ancestor of the fighting old Commodore played in this immortal fray:

“ Et là se tindrent tout coyement jusques à tant qu’il fut temps de traire, et tous les autres Anglois demourerent avec leur roy: lequel tantost fait ordonner sa bataille par vn chevalier chenu de vieillesse, nommé Thomas Epinhen, mettant les archiers au front deuant, et puis les gensd’armes. Et apres fait ainsi comme deux esles de gensd’armes et archiers, et les chevaulx et bagages furent mis derriere l’ost. Lesquels archiers ficherent deuant eux chacun un penchon aiguisé à deux bouts; iceluy Thomas enhorta à tous generallement de par le dit roy d’Angleterre, qu’ils combattissent vigoureusement pour garantir leurs vies; et ainsi cheuauchant luy troisesme par deuant la dicte bataille, apres qu’il eut fait lesdictes ordonnances jettā en hault un baston qu’il tenoit en sa main, en disant ‘néstrocque,’ et descendit à pied comme estoit le roy, tous les autres: au jetter, le dit baston tous les Anglois soubdainement feirent une tres grand criée, dont grandement s’esmerveillirent les Francois. Et quand lesdict An-

glois veirent que les Francois ne les approchoient, ils allerent devers eux tout bellement par ordonnance, et derechef feirent un tres grand cry en arrestant et reprenant leur alaine. Et adonc les dessusdicts archers abscons audit pré, tirerent vigoureusement sur les Francois, en eslevant comme les autres grand huée, et incontinent les dits Anglois approchans les Francois, premierement leurs archiers, dont il y'en auoit bien treize mille, commencerent à tirer à la volée contre iceux Francois d'aussi loing qu'ils pouvoient tirer de toute leur puissance, desquels archiers la plus grand partie estoient sans armures en leurs pourpointeaux, leurs chausses auallées ayans haches pendues à leur courroyes ou espées et si en y'auoit aucuns tous nuds pieds, et sans chapperon.

After having performed this good service, our truculent Thomas, when the action had become more general, was led by the crush of the fight to where Henry himself was, to use the phrase historical, “ performing prodigies of

Now this ancestor of the Bacuissarts, Sir Thomas Epinhen, was a rough and sterling old English knight, who had, for the mere love of fighting and attachment to the royal person, sold all his patrimony, and borne himself most valorously throughout this campaign. He had suffered with the generality; and, with them, did his best, as Monsieur Voltaire has said, to shock the more polished French into a precipitate and disastrous flight. But before the modesty of the Gauls was so terribly wrought upon as to make them take to their heels at the indecency of their opponents, the gallant Henry was himself borne down, and surrounded by numbers. His position was perilous in the extreme, when fortunately Sir Thomas Epinhen rushed into the *melée*, and, cleaving a path for himself, he bestrode the prostrate king; and,

“ Though gallantly armed, and with his beaver on,
Yet had he not his *cuiques* on his thighs.”

Though royalty was down, yet he was

neither so much hurt nor so much dispirited as not to be tickled with the ridicule of his situation. After the rescue was complete, and he had embraced the gallant warrior, he asked him jocosely how he had dared to treat the Majesty of England with so much indignity. When the field was over, and all further danger past, the King sent for his deliverer, again embraced him before the whole court, and openly avowed him as the preserver of his life, and thus, in all probability, not a very remote cause of the splendid victory. This took place so soon after the action that Sir Thomas was still in his *sans culottes* fashion, and began stammering out his apologies, when the King swore a solemn oath that he and his posterity for ever should be entitled, whenever they thought fit to claim it, to enter the royal presence, in camp or in field, in city or in court, just as he then stood: and he immediately ordered a charter to be granted him to that effect, conveying also to the saviour of the King's life, and his heirs for ever, sundry

broad lands and rich manors, among which that of Trestletree was the most important. At the same time a surname was added to that which he already bore, and he was called, during life and in all his title-deeds, Sir Thomas Epinhen Bascuissarts, in pointed allusion to the state of his apparelling on the memorable day of Agincourt. He was also permitted to place on the dexter of his shield three batons, and to add for a supporter a knight fully armed down to the waist, and thence terminating, in heraldic language, in a man proper, with this motto, "NE'STROQUE."*

* NE'STROQUE—*Cut your stick.* The origin of this phrase, now so vulgarly hawked about the streets, proceeds from this command of the ancestor of the old Commodore. When the archers went to battle, they were in the habit of placing before them, in a slanting direction, long sticks, or pointed stakes, to keep off the incursions of the horse; whilst they discharged their arrows from behind them. Sir Thomas Epinhen seeing the French rather too ceremonious about advancing, cried out to his men, "*Cut your sticks.*"

In the course of a few generations, the Epinhen was dropped, and the orthography of the word was altered to Bacuissart, which, at sea, had very generally deteriorated, when borne by the old Commodore, into Backysquirt, owing to his predilection for chewing the weed, and his energy of ejecting its dark-coloured extraction. Whatever changes the name might hereafter have undergone, had there been heirs male, and those been seamen, it is useless to speculate upon, as the name has now become extinct, merging in that of —; never mind, I must not anticipate.

I have now taken a long cruise, after Toby Lumpkin's fashion, and brought the reader back to the very point from whence he and I

NE'STROQUE: that is to say, throw away your sticks, and at 'em at once. This is the origin of the sea phrase, "Cut your stick;" and not, as some vainly pretend, &c. &c.—*Smelfungus Noddypate, of the Antiquarian Society.*

set out together, when the old Commodore was delivered of his stentorian "Zounds!"

We will not dwell upon those years of inactivity and illness that supervened after he was deprived of his command. We will merely say that he travelled from watering-place to watering-place, a martyr to remorse, disappointed ambition, ennui, the gout, and a thousand fanciful disorders,—that he fell into an intemperance almost habitual,—that his coarse manners repelled almost all visitors,—and that his indulgences and his waywardness had made his beautiful daughter the spoiled and nearly ruined creature that we have described her at the outset of this excellent history.

We have now only to detail the systematic, and almost insane persecution to which Lady Astell subjected her brother.

As one of these terrible scenes will be sufficient, we shall describe it, and then pass on, as rapidly as we can, to more agreeable and merrier

subjects. The fortitude of the widow so cruelly made childless was, by this last infliction, entirely broken down; her equanimity seemed utterly destroyed, and her eccentricities now might almost be pronounced to extend to aberration of intellect. The feelings that she entertained towards Sir Octavius could not be called desire of revenge; had she been accused of it, she would have denied, nay repelled the imputation with scorn. She named her acts as deeds of expiation, an awakening to repentance, a temporal infliction to save him from eternal punishment; she knew that these acts gave him unutterable pain, but she performed them as a means of his soul's salvation. Nobly did the old Commodore bear them, as a brother, as a man, and as a Christian.

Lady Astell lived in the deepest seclusion. She had already provided for Daniel Danvers, by settling on him, for life, eighty pounds a-year; and by procuring for him a midshipman's rating in the frigate commanded by her nephew, Cap-

tain Oliphant. As Daniel was the orphan son of a warrant officer, killed in Bridport's action, this provision was for him princely. He could now dress and cope with his messmates in those expenses incidental to young gentlemen in the naval service. Lady Astell, having thus provided for one, whom she would have loved for his devotion to her son, if then she could have loved anything, found herself, as she wished, totally alone. She would not see the rector of the parish; and, for the first time in her life, her doors were closed even against Mr. Underdown.

She placed all her large establishment in the deepest mourning. Her carriages were black and funereal, and void of all heraldic bearings. There was a dismal ostentation in her woe. She would use only the blackest horses, and never did she emerge from her tomb-like seclusion, excepting when she went to church to pray, or to the old Commodore's to persecute. She clothed herself in the deepest weeds, and her

forehead, bound with a plain band of white linen, concealing her hair, was the only thing not black upon her. She seemed like one dressed in a dark shroud. Thus attired, in her mourning coach with four horses and two out-riders, the horses with large body-cloths upon them of black and fringed velvet, all the servants appearing more like mutes than the attendants of a lady of immense wealth, she would pass through the county to the only two places she ever stirred abroad to visit—the parish church and Trestletree Hall.

This procession was, in no ways, different from a funeral, excepting that the nodding and sable plumes were wanting, and that the pale and still spectre in the hearse-like carriage breathed and lived. As the pace of this singular equipage was always slow and solemn, whenever it passed, all that saw it stopped, and reverently uncovered their heads.

It was but the third day, at noon, after he had arrived at his family mansion, that the su-

perseded, gout-tortured, and remorse-stricken Commodore was startled into an oath, from his second glass of rum-and-water, by seeing what he thought was a funeral invading the privacy of his grounds.

“ Hill—holloa ! Underdown, hoy, hoy ! Fire and fury—mark you that ! I’m thunderstruck if every fool can’t get to windward of this poor old sheer hulk that was once the fighting Commodore. May I be most notoriously well d——d, if that canting son of a brass tea-kettle, the rector, don’t want to establish a right of way through my own grounds, and across my very window ! O this gout, this infernal gout ! I can’t move. Up, Underdown, up with ye ; call out footmen, grooms, helpers, stable-boys, broomsticks, and bludgeons ; head them, and turn them back. Quick, or there’ll be a legal high road made, before I can turn my quid.”

“ My dear sir,” said the quiet man, in the gentlest tones, “ you put me all over into a tremble. This is no funeral, my good sir.

Consider your gout, and the recent calamity that has befallen this house. My dear Commodore, listen to your old friend; do, do moderate this violence, for my sake—because—I rather think that—that—this may be your sister, the poor, bereaved Lady Astell, coming to visit you.”

“ Ah !” and, perhaps for the first time in his life, the hero of his country’s battles turned deadly pale.

“ And so it is,” continued Mr. Underdown, as, at a funereal pace, the carriage passed the window.

“ Take me away—my crutches—take me away ! Will nobody hoist me on their back, and walk off with me ? Where’s that great, hulking fellow, William Butler ? He can carry me. I won’t see her—I can’t—I can’t.”

“ But I will,” shrieked out Miss Rebecca. “ I will, though ; and we’ll talk about poor Augustus.”

“ Fiend !” said the father, seizing a phial of

untasted medicine, which he would have hurled at his daughter, had not the interposing hand of his quiet friend prevented him. At that instant the doors were flung open, and into the room slowly glided the shadowy figure of his sister.

“It is nothing living—it is a spirit! Are we not exempt from these awful visitations in broad sunshine? O God, take this sight from me!” And, completely terrified, the Commodore hid his face in his hands.

The Rebecca, who was just so eager to meet her aunt, ran screaming into the remotest corner of the room, and there crouched down, with her face to the wall.

Mr. Underdown would have advanced to this awful visiter, but she impressively waved him back. Miss Matilda sat trembling in her chair, unable to rise from terror, and too much horrified to faint. A deep silence ensued, broken only by the hysterical sobbings of Rebecca in her far corner.

Mr. Underdown was the first who spoke. "Lady Astell," said he, in his mildest tones, "indeed this is not well. It is unkind thus to aggravate our sorrows by, what I really must call, something like a theatrical display. I would not offend you for a thousand worlds: your grief is holy in our eyes; pray, pray, do not mock it, and humble yourself by this parade. You are pale—you are ill; your countenance is ghastly. Pray, dear lady, does your physician know of this ill-timed visit? By my life, he does not! Will you not speak to me—*me*, your old, your most devoted friend? If you will cast me—all of us—from you, do it more humanely. Will you not be seated? O speak to me!"

During this address, Lady Astell remained as motionless as if she had been then and there transmuted into marble. There was "no speculation in her eye." Twice her soundless lips moved; at length these words came from them, passionless, emotionless.

“Bid that man look upon my face.”

The Commodore fixed his eye fearfully upon her, and, after much effort, spoke to this effect: “Sister, I have wronged you dreadfully; but I call God to witness, that I am innocent of the boy’s death. I did all that a weak and poor old man could do to save his life. That I was harsh to him—very harsh, brutally harsh—with shame, with all the bitterness of undying remorse, I confess; but oh, Agnes! is this the way that brother and sister should meet?”

“Give me my child!”

“Why would you thus shorten my few remaining days? Have you not already done vengeance enough on the offending head of your own, your only brother?—disgraced me before the face of my sovereign, dishonoured me in my profession, cut me off from the only path of usefulness in which I can tread, debarred me of the only means by which I might make reparation for my offence, by sacrificing what remains of my wretched life in the service of my

country? Is not this enough? O Agnes, my sister!"

"Give me my child!"

"Would that I could, and mine with it! He is in heaven—in God's holy hands. Augustus, look down upon your miserable uncle, and judge between me and your stony-hearted mother."

"My child—my child—my child!"

"Agnes! will my death satisfy you? A thousand deaths were happiness to this. Forgive me, Agnes! I will kneel to you—I, who never knelt to mortal. Say but to me, in the tone of past times, 'Brother, brother!' and I will crawl to you, and kiss the hem of your garment."

"Man of the iron heart, I come to demand my child. Lo you! here is my warrant." And then, taking the fatal letter from her bosom, she read its contents.

"You see that I do but obey the voice from the deep and stormy grave of the ocean. I

demand my child. The destroyer quails before the bereaved mother. I will come to you again, and again, and again. I have but one demand—my child. Give me my child, MURDERER !”

She turned, and, without noticing in the least, any one further, slowly departed.

“ This is insanity,” groaned out poor Underdown.

“ My heart is broken—help me to bed !” were the only words that the wretched old Commodore uttered for many days.

Lady Astell came again and again, in the same dismal pomp, and made the same monotonous and ghostly demand. She would never sit down, or unbend in the least to exchange the slightest courtesies of social life. She would have killed any one, who had not had the seasoned, oak-like constitution of her brother. He tried many ways to avoid these visitations ; but without effect. Once, when he refused to admit the sable cortège within the gates of the lodge, she remained outside, in solemn state,

for eight hours, through a pitiless storm. All her establishment seemed to be gifted with the same enduring spirit as herself. The postillions sat upon their horses, and the servants remained in their places, all through this trial, nearly motionless. At first tens, then fifties, and at length hundreds assembled: all knew her errand, and the general sympathy, for miles round, was with her. Her passive obstinacy conquered. The hootings and revilings of the mob reached the mansion. The gates were at length thrown open; and, attended by nearly a thousand people, she alighted as usual at the hall-door.

The mob dispersed quietly. The interview took place precisely like the former. Lady Astell showed not the slightest traces of anger at the attempt to exclude her; she confined herself strictly to her demand, and the reading of her son's letter. She was never afterwards denied.

The old Commodore made another attempt to

escape thus being haunted by a living apparition, failed, and then gave it up in despair.

He went to a remote watering-place. The third day, the eternal funeral equipage was at his door: he received his sister as usual; and then posted back to Trestletree Hall. It was best to confine the circulation of the scandal to the narrowest possible limits. These visitations were regulated by no apparent order, perhaps only by the state of his sister's mind. Sometimes the Commodore would receive two, or even three, in rapid succession; and sometimes months would elapse between them.

We must mention this, to the honour of the old Commodore, that when he was urged, as the nearest of kin, to apply for a writ *de lunatico inquirendo*, as to the state of his sister's mind, that he rejected the suggestion so sternly and so decidedly, that no one ever dared again to make it to him. Thus years passed on, until the time of the opening of our story in the first chapter.

CHAPTER III.

“ For the puppies as they pass,
Cocking up a squinting glass,
Thus run down the old Commodore.
‘ That’s the old Commodore,
The rum old Commodore,
The gouty old Commodore—he, he, he !
Why the bullets and the gout,
Have so knock’d his hull about,
He’ll never more be fit for sea.’ ”

“ ZOUNDS ! ” From this emphatic word, as a starting point, we shall now get on full sail, with a fair wind, a favouring current, and studding-sails alow and aloft. The day after that Becky had so ingeniously contrived that the cat should draw the parrot and the cage over the gouty foot of her father, with a few incidental scratches from Tabby, the old Commodore was very poorly. His sister had not

paid him a visit for some time—and he was expecting that; Doctor Gunningham had paid him visits constantly every day—he was expecting him; and, with him, a tremendous lecture, for pills unbolted, nauseous draughts unswallowed, and regimen unobserved. In fact, when the Commodore got up, he was full of expectations of a disagreeable nature. About eleven o'clock, a low volley of oaths was heard, like the distant rattle of artillery, rolling down the grand staircase, which rapidly grew louder, until the door of the lawn drawing-room was flung open, and in came the old Commodore, supported, on either side, by a stout footman. It might have been about eleven in the forenoon: the day was inspiritingly fine, and the sunbeams danced into the apartment, as if quivering with their own joy through the flowers and leaves that hung about the windows. His sister Matilda was presiding at the breakfast-table, and Rebecca was bounding about the room, apparently with the vain

attempt, by the mere fatigue of exercise, to bring into some subjection the exuberance of her animal spirits.

The old Commodore was, in due form, inducted into his capacious and cushioned easy chair; his gout-pillows duly and tenderly placed beneath the offending foot, and his huge round tobacco-box within reach, at his right hand. At first, as he sank into his seat, his face was screwed up into that expression that the features will assume when they attempt to conceal the indications of great physical suffering. As the pains upon his late exertions gradually subsided, and the merry sunshine danced among the splendid apparatus for the first meal, and was playfully dodging the shadowed forms of the leaves and flowers on the carpet, as the fragrant air stole in fitfully through the half-opened windows, as his eye fell upon the delicate and help-beseeching beauty of his sister; and, above all, upon the personation of exuberant health, loveliness, and joy of his spoiled child;—when all these he saw and felt, his

features relaxed, happiness and tenderness began their delightful workings upon his countenance, and the first effusion of his newly born felicity broke out thus uncouthly.

“What a figure-head for the Victory! If I was the king,” (he never said “God bless him” since he was superseded,) “I’d build the finest first-rate that ever swam the waters, and I’d call her the “Angel of Beauty,” I would; and I’d clap the full length figure of my Becky under her bowsprit. Come here and kiss me, you little bewitching vixen, do—take care of my foot, huzzy. Get astern of me; you may hold on by my tiller,” (meaning his clubbed pigtail,) “and fling your arms round my neck. There, ’vast heaving; d’ye think, huzzy, that the old man has no feeling in the roots of his hair! Ah! you wouldn’t hurt your father for the world; would you, Becky?”

“Only a little, when he’s naughty; but you’ll be a good papa to-day, won’t you? and mind and do all that I tell you. It’s all for your good—we will be so happy.”

“Very well, Becky; so the old hulk is to be towed along by the trim little yacht—very well.”

“That’s a good papa; that is so proper of you. O this would be a heaven of a house, if everybody did as I told them. Well, father, then I am really to be Commodore all day.”

“With all my heart,” said the old gentleman, benignantly. “What do you say to it, Matilda?”

“Octavius, she has been the tyrant of the house these—I don’t know how many years. If she’d only see Mrs. Carpue, the great London dressmaker, take my advice about the corset, and use my pimperl water—for she has one monstrous freckle on her forehead, and another coming—then I should ask nothing more of her.”

“And I,” said Mr. Underdown, making his appearance with the rough drafts of several leases, “would ask nothing more of her than that she would read two hours a-day, study

two more, have a master for French, one for music, one for dancing, and one for drawing; and give me two or three hours every evening, that we might get a little insight into the classics."

"O you monster! O you tyrant! But I'm now to be the old Commodore; and everybody is to do everything that I choose, in every way, everywhere—at least, everywhere where I am. And then we are all to be so happy—all, because I shall order it; and, first, father is not to chew any more pigtail; and so here that goes:" and out of the window the tobacco-box was jerked.

"Is that the way to make me happy, you—you—? Bring it back."

"I won't; and let me see any one who will. I'm quite sick of being called Miss Backy-squirt, all because ——"

"My tobacco-box, hussy!" with something between a growl and a roar. "Come, Under-down; take pity upon a poor water-logged,

dismasted old craft ; make a board out on the lawn, and tack in with my backy."

"If he dare!" said the young lady.

"You see, Commodore, how I'm situated. You've given up the command for the day. Always must obey the lawful orders of the officer in command. Besides, I must confess that I really should like to see you make the attempt to leave off chewing the weed, and confine yourself to smoking it."

"He sha'n't smoke either," said the considerate daughter.

"Now, Matty, my delicate darling," said the old Commodore, having recourse to cajolery, "step out on the lawn, and bring me my box. It does my heart good to see your delicate little feet playing at pit-a-pat along the floor, in those pretty rose-coloured satin shoes. You have a foot—as Jack said, when the white elephant of Ceylon trod the malefactor to death."

"So you like my satin slipper, do you, brother? But you know that the Bacuissarts

were always remarkable for their hands and feet."

"Those of the head of the family, for example," said the old Commodore, first regarding wofully the iron contrivance at the end of his left arm, and then the immense wolding of flannel and swathing around his right leg. "Well, Matty, do now use your little hands and feet to get my box."

"O dear no, brother, anything but that. You know I wouldn't handle it if I could help it; the perfume of it is so disagreeable. Besides, you know, Rebecca would not let me."

"Ah! I forgot that," said the Baronet, sinking back resignedly into his chair.

With a similar imperiousness did Miss Rebecca refuse her father his thimbleful of rum after his breakfast; but, though she was thus all potent in denying, she was quite unsuccessful in giving; for neither her coaxing nor her fury could prevail on him to take his medicine. However, as she was to be mistress that day,

the pipe was peremptorily and scornfully refused.

“What in heaven shall I do to get through this long, blessed, sunshiny morning?” said the old gentleman, in direful anticipation, when all the breakfast equipage was removed. “No quid, no pipe, no grog—it is dreadful.”

“You had better attentively read over these leases and documents before you sign them,” said Mr. Underdown, pushing over to him a huge pile of papers and parchments.

“I’d sooner be keelhauled, Downy. Are you in a conspiracy to murder me to-day, with that vixen?”

“We’re all trying to make you happy, father, for one day at least. Now do be good, and you’ll be so comfortable.”

“Brother, I shall be very happy to read you the sermon against drunkenness that Dr. Jobdowderdem preached last Sunday. He sent me the manuscript yesterday, with his best compliments to *you*,” lisped out Matilda.

“I’d sooner work the bellows with my gouty foot, whilst the devil played the rogue’s march on the organ. What business has the spooney to preach against drunkenness, when he can’t stand his fourth bottle? He nêver dines here but I’m ashamed of him.”

“Don’t be annoyed about want of amusement, father. There’s company coming this morning. We are sure of Doctor Gunningham and the apothecary; and I hear that there are three fashionable young gentlemen from town on a visit to Mr. Rubasore, that thin old gentleman that you dislike so much. They’re all coming; and you’ll be so comfortable.”

“May I be flogged—”

“Hush, brother! And as we shall have all this nice company, I must make myself presentable. Mr. Rubasore, last time he called, ventured to insinuate that I was about to begin to look a little old. I think he meant that, when he talked of matronly graces, the brute. Now, my dear brother, this is rather a strong

light certainly; and no one, without it might be Rebecca, would, in their senses, and out of their teens, ever so little, like myself, venture to sit across it."

"Well, face it, sister, face it—always face the light."

"It is better, sometimes; but sit with your back to it—that is for people who are beginning to break. Now, brother—now, Mr. Underdown, both of you may think that I am going to ask you a very silly question; but it is not silly if you knew all—but very, very important. Do you remember how I looked about ten days ago?"

"Why, much of a muchness, I believe; a rum little vessel for smooth water and fine weather—a little the worse for wear or so—rigging always in fine order—lots of bunting flying—a little crazy or so in the hull, nothing to signify—wants fresh caulking, and a new coat or two of paint, but this can't be done upon us poor devils, when the complexion

begins to fade, and the seams open in wrinkles."

"What in the name of wonder are you talking about? What have faded complexions and wrinkles to do with *me*, or with my question? You are a learned man, Mr. Underdown, and a much better observer than my brother. Do you, my dear sir, remember how I was looking ten days back?"

"Why exactly, as far as I can judge, as you do now—delicate, good, pretty, and amiable."

"Thank you; but, now speak frankly, don't you think that I am looking much, very much younger than I was at that time?"

"Backstays and bilgewater! how should you? Does age add to youth; and are we to grow younger by growing older? Sister, where have you picked up this nonsense?"

"Nonsense!—brother, I was not speaking to you. Mr. Underdown, do answer my question."

"Why, my dear madam, I really see no

difference; but philosophically speaking, a difference must have taken place, even in ten days, though altogether imperceptible—to the eye of a constant associate; and that difference, I need not tell a lady of your good sense must be, that you must be looking now just ten days *older*, and not ten days younger, than you did just ten days ago.”

“O dear!” said the lady, with a ‘little scream, “I am afraid, then, that I am very wicked, and want the blessing of God.”

“Riddle, riddle me ree,” said the Commodore; “what crotchets has the woman got in her noddle?”

“I am sorry that you should think so,” said Mr. Underdown, gravely.

“It must surely arise from my not being able to find out where Mary Balnum lives.”

“Mystery on mystery! what balderdash is this?—what, in the name of common sense, sister, has Mary Balnum got to do with your growing younger, and losing the grace of God?”

“ I don’t know,” said the lady, poutingly.

“ Pray who is Mary Balnum ?”

“ I don’t know.”

“ Why this is as mystifying as false signals.
Can you explain anything about the matter ?”

“ I don’t know, but sister Oliphant does.”

“ Well, what does sister Oliphant know ?”

“ O it is a great secret ; a secret how to make
oneself look younger.”

“ The very secret for me, Matty ; will it
put an odd eye in, take out this ugly scar
from across my conk, or give me a set of pliable
fingers to my fin ?”

“ What strange names you do give things,
brother. No, my secret don’t say that it will
do all that.”

“ Well, let’s hear it, and then we can judge
what it will do.”

“ Why, brother, how you talk !—did I not
tell you it was a secret ? I gave a great deal of
money for it.”

“ So I thought.”

“ And well worth it too. A German prince had it from the descendant in a right line from the celebrated beauty, Ninon de l'Enclos. He never imparted it to any one but me. Not that I particularly wanted it; but you know it was just as well to try it. It seems to have failed somehow—I wanted to know in what manner.”

“ How can we tell without we know what it is? Not even Underdown there, with his algreba and his mathematics, can answer, without you give him some data to go upon.”

“ That's true enough—I don't tell you the secret as a secret, but I only read it to you that I may understand it.” So producing from the inmost recess of her writing-desk, a small piece of highly-scented paper, she read as follows: “ Madame Ninon de l'Enclos' secret of how to give the face a younger look. Take sulphur—”

“ Good for the Scotch fiddle,” interrupted the old Commodore.

“ Gumoliban and myrrh two ounces each ; of amber—”

“ Good mouth-pieces for tobacco-pipes.”

“ Amber, six drachms—”

“ Drachms of amber ; coloured brandy you mean.”

“ And a pint and a half of rose-water. Get a Mary Balnum to distil this, and wash with it at bed-time, and, in the morning, with barley-water, and, *with the blessing of God*, it will assuredly give you a younger look.”

“ And how, Matty, you simpleton, do you ever think you can obtain the blessing of God, whilst you are smearing over your face with such precious nastiness?” This speech was, I hardly need say, the brotherly effusion of the old sailor. “ You have been sammyfoozled by a rascally swindler. You met this cheat, I suppose, at your sister Oliphant’s. Ah, I thought so—and how many guineas did you give for it? O Matty, Matty, to be cheated this way, you must be a great deal *younger* than you look.”

“ I sha’n’t tell you what I gave for it,” said the gentle lady, almost crying ; “ and it may be a good recipe after all. I should have asked my sister where to find this Mary Balnum ; I thought that I could have distilled it as well as she.” •

“ Permit me to read the recipe,” said Mr. Underdown ; “ be assured that I shall not avail myself of the inestimable secret.”

“ You may, and welcome.”

“ I thank you, heartily. If I find it good, we will try it on the Commodore.”

“ I don’t think you will.”

Mr. Underdown then read the paper over very deliberately, as Lord Ogilby says, with “ good emphasis and good discretion,” and kept his gravity admirably until he arrived at the words, “ Get a Mariæ Balneum to distil this.” He kept, however, his joke to himself : and, writing an explanation of the words on a sheet of paper, he gallantly enclosed the recipe in it, and handed it respectfully to the lady.

She, all agitation, and blushing more beautifully than ever cosmetic produced, conceiving that her old friend had, at length, forgetting his former vows to her sister Agnes, made a declaration, arose, and hurriedly left the room:

“Hollo, there she scuds; that’s the beauty-wash for you. Oh, Underdown, you old rogue, you do more towards making her young—*always with the blessing of God*, you know—than any Mary Balnum, whoever she may be. Win her and wear her, with all my heart and soul—she could not better bestow her thousands; and I’ll add a few myself, and this little romp be none the worse,” hooking his daughter to him, and giving her a lusty smack with his lips.

“Now, father, you see how happy you are when you do what I order you. You must, let me take off all this nasty iron, and screw on your company hand, with the white kid glove on; do, there’s a good papa.”

“Anything you please, Becky; only give me my backy-box.”

Further discussion on this very delicate point was now prevented, and the contemplated change, also, of the extremity of the left arm, by the entrance of Mr. Rubasore, and three rather young, and very much over-dressed gentlemen.

“ Ah ! Sir Octavius,” droned out the guest, “ I am wretched and melancholy at perceiving there is truth in the report going so actively about. You are breaking fast—visibly breaking up.”

“ Whoever told you so, is an infamous, impudent liar ; I am excellent well, bating this d—d gout, which everybody knows is a very healthy disease.”

“ What, in the stomach ?” said one of the young gentlemen, eyeing the old sailor steadily through his glass.

“ Who’s talking about stomach, youngster ?”

“ Youngster, Sir Octavius ! I have a name,

though, perhaps, not known here, well known in *good* society ; Mr. Tiffany, if you please, Sir Octavius."

" No offence, no offence, Mr. Twopenny ; any friend of Mr. Rubasore's is as welcome here as—as Mr. Rubasore himself. Od'sblood ! talking of my stamina ; I'm a hale man yet."

" No, no, Commodore—phthisical, phthisical : believe a sincere friend ; the wheezing in your chest, at every expiration you make, goes to the hearts of your friends. We shall never get you afloat again, Commodore."

" Mark ye me, Rubasore : this may be all very considerate in you—particularly so ; but, sir, damn me, I don't like it."

" Wouldn't offend you for the world, Sir Octavius ; but don't you find, at times, a leetle—a leetle dizziness in the head ? a dreadful blow, that, on your occiput and os frontis, and the brain comes fearfully near the region of the eye ; the sword that left that scar cut deeply."

“ I’ll just trouble you to heave a short stay a-peak ; or, mark you me——”

“ Not for the world, Commodore: the French have marked you already quite entirely sufficiently.”

Whilst this thrusting was proceeding with the two principals, the three young gentlemen had edged on the blind side of the Commodore, and were displaying as many antics as my lady’s pet monkey, principally consisting in mimicking the actions, more energetic than graceful, of our respectable hero. Mr. Underdown, as if the conversation was wholly unworthy of his attention, appeared to be deeply buried in the perusal of one of those extensive spreads of parchment, by the means of which lawyers carpet their way into affluence ; but, every now and then, he might be observed glancing, with vigilant eye, over the black-lettered composition.

But where was Miss Rebecca ? Extremely busy. In vain had the three young coxcombs

tried all their little arts to inveigle the beautiful hoyden into their proximity or into anything resembling a continued conversation. All her answers were abrupt ; indeed, attached as we are to her, it must be confessed they were what is vulgarly called saucy ; that is to say, half a degree worse than impertinent : and, had they only achieved the other half degree of offensiveness, she would have been just as witty and piquant as is a little author who hast just earned a little reputation, by the means of a work, of very little merit, fêted by a little coterie.

Rebecca was busy. She hated Mr. Rubasore, with all that frank hatred of an open, ingenuous, and violent disposition, which made Dr. Johnson say, that he loved a good hater. She hated him because he teased her father, more than she did herself ; and she also hated him because she had never heard him utter one good-natured speech, or strive, in any way, to make any one near him a bit happier for his

presence. She also dreaded his powers of language; for he had the art of receiving her rude and petulant answers with a sarcastic suavity, and of arming them with the poison of his ridicule, and thus sending them back to her, like so many barbed darts. Young as she was, she knew that, to contend with him successfully, the tongue was not the weapon she ought to use.

Now, Mr. Rubasore was a youngish old gentleman of about forty-eight; a bachelor, very selfish, and, for a mere country gentleman, not ill-informed. He was as much the reverse of the Commodore as two men could almost possibly be. I have, already, described the Commodore's person. Mr. Rubasore was very thin, and had never a deeper wound upon any part of his body, than might have been inflicted by the scratch of a pin; was never known to be in a rage, and never known to be thoroughly pleased. At this period, neat gentlemen, after thirty, wore cues, *vulgice* pig-

tails. Now, in no respects, did Mr. Rubasore and the old Commodore differ more than in their respective cues. That of the old fighting sailor was as thick as a man's wrist, clubbed, and short, very ungainly tied, or rather rolled round with broad, and generally dirty, black ribbon. It stuck out stiffly: and, if any of my lady readers ever saw such an article—an article, we are sure, that may be found in any European kitchen—it was something like the blackened handle of a tin saucepan, thickest at the extremity; yet the Commodore had an affection for his tail.

Now the cue of Mr. Rubasore was a long switchy sort of an affair, not very thick at the root, and yet, unlike the Commodore's, as it descended down the lank back, it grew small by degrees, and beautifully less. This love of a tail was wouled, with studied accuracy, by brilliant, black, and very narrow ribbon, which terminated, within one inch of the extremity, in a delicately shaped double bow.

But the remaining inch of this tail—that was Mr. Rubasore's glory. Of all his feet and inches—and, being a tall man, he had many—that was the inch of which he was most proud. The white hairs fizzed out from the confining ribbon wantonly, this way and that, each particular hair taking a curve of its own. So skilfully puffed out was it, that you could hardly think it was a tuft of curling hair, but rather an ebullition of glory, conveyed through an ebony tube, evolving in spiracles of light. There was a tail for you ! and for Mr. Rubasore, too : and thereupon he appended much of his conséquence. That such a tail should be victimized, and by a little uneducated huzzy like Becky Backy !

So soon as Miss Rebecca saw the lank legs of Mr. Rubasore swinging one way, and his tail another, as he alighted from his horse, she hastened to one of her confederates, (for she had previously taken counsel on this tail, in the stable-yard,) and putting on a pair of old

and well-greased gloves, she was supplied with a most tenacious substance, a vile mixture of birdlime and cobbler's wax. The instinct of tormenting, so natural to the female breast, told her how to use it.

She entered this memorable lawn drawing-room in the midst of the insidious teasings that Mr. Rubasore was launching at our old friend. But little notice was taken of her at first, in the counterchange of the covert hostility of words. She, therefore, placed herself at the back of Mr. Rubasore's chair: and, placing her face nearly in contact with that of the skinny tormenter, she appeared to be encouraging him with her smiles. The old gentleman, proud in the proximity of so much youthful loveliness, permitted his sallow face, from time to time, to touch, as if by accident, the downy plumpness that lay so temptingly near. The little traitress seemed to be gratified by these surreptitious caresses, whilst, all the while, she was thoroughly kneading the tenacious abomination

which she had procured in the stable-yard into the terminating glory of that tail, which was the glory of the head of the stealthily amorous old bachelor. When this was fully effected, she whispered into his ear, " Give it papa well ;" and then quietly slipping out of the room, divested herself of her gloves, and reappeared before she was missed, with, considering who it was, extraordinarily clean hands.

This may be thought to be hard usage for Mr. Rubasore ; but it was really nothing more than the *lex talionis* ; for he had brought the three town-bred gentlemen with him, that morning, for the amiable purpose of quizzing the old Commodore. That they had irritated him, and that right soon, we already know ; how they succeeded in their avowed object, will shortly be seen. But hark ! there is a carriage and pair stopping at the hall door, with an emphatic crash ; there is a bustle that announces an arrival of importance. Truly, somebody important has arrived : it is Doctor

Ginningham. No, my dear Doctor : by every curl of thine elaborately curled wig, we will not do thee the disrespect of describing thy *physique* and thy *morale* at the tail-end of a chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Here am I distressed, like a ship water-logg’d,
Not a tow-rope at hand, or an oar ;
I am left by my crew, and may I be flogged,
But the doctor’s an ass, nothing more.
While I’m swallowing his slops,
How nimble go his chops,
Thus quizzing the Old Commodore.
Bad case, Commodore,
Can’t say, Commodore,
Mus’n’t flatter, Commodore—he, he, he !
For the bullets and the gout
Have so knock’d your hull about,
That you’ll never more be fit for sea.”

DOCTOR GINNINGHAM was a man of great practice : consequently, he practised the great

man. He had a great soul, as well as a great body ; but this great soul was filled with but one permanent idea—that of his great self, soul and body. Now, a man so completely possessed of one single idea is always a great talker ; indeed, he talked so rapidly and so incessantly, that, could it be at all reconciled with chronology, it might have been safely asserted, that some one had thrown a brick of the tower of Babel at his head, and cracked his skull with the blow. Again, it is very possible to talk endlessly, without any ideas ; but everybody knows we can't without words. Now, the words in the English language are not infinite : Doctor Gunningham's oracular exhibitions were. He was thus forced into an eternity of repetition, and, by long habit, he came to love it so well, that he envied and was at enmity with every echo, for invading one of his most revered rights—the right of repetition. It was from the eternal alarum-bell that he carried between his jaws, that the

watchmakers took their first hint of the infinite screw. In fact, if you were to listen to him patiently, for three hours at a sitting, he would incontinently claim a fourth, upon the same principle that a certain beggar, about Norton Falgate, used to crave the assistance of the charitable, because he could not eat less than four pounds of bread at a meal.

And yet, the learned Doctor, with this one all-possessing idea, himself, had a sort of invention, which consisted in finding a way to speak nothing upon anything, and yet never make an end to his talking;—with his liberty of speech, he was a wonderful man.

He was remarkably tall, and loved to harangue standing. His wig was always powdered into a whiteness as nearly immaculate as anything can pretend to be in this foully spotted world. Its curls were elaborately systematical. He eschewed the professional sable, and usually went clad, at home, in a figured

dressing-gown, of rich brocade; abroad, in a court dress, generally of brown, with silver lace, and steel buttons. He wore very chaste and very ample ruffles, and carried a ponderous cane, with a bulb of gold on its head, that made it look almost as imposing as his own. He was anxiously careful always to keep that cane in the perpendicular. He was never seen to walk with it, or trail it, or slant it. When he was silent, which was only on rare occasions, this cane seemed to hang perpendicularly from his nose; when he spoke, it was advanced with an energetic action, and grasped firmly by the middle. Besides his privilege of worrying to death all the diseased gentry for a circumference of thirty miles around his private abode, he was in the enjoyment of an ample private fortune, and of a parasite, in a most obsequious and silent apothecary.

Protruding his cane at arm's length, he entered: and, followed by Mr. Calumbo, the

apothecary, got himself as nearly in the centre of the room, as the furniture, and those present, would permit him to place himself.

“ I salute all. Commodore—don’t speak ; I will not allow *that*—you are worse. I see it : a complication of diseases ; an access of pyrexia upon our patient, at this moment, Calumbo—don’t speak : listen ! Have you thrown in—did you throw in, last night, the acetate of ammonia, with the tartarized antimony, and the tincture of opium ?—silence !—with the mint-water ? did you throw these in last night ?—not a word !——

“ Yes, and I threw them——”

“ Commodore, I enjoin silence. Your case is bad, very bad : never flatter ; why should I ? No more, Commodore, will you partake of ‘ the glorious pomp and circumstance of war ; ’ ‘ Othello’s occupation’s gone ’—silence, Commodore ! Am I not your medical adviser ? am I not, Sir Octavius ?—go to sea again ? pooh - never ! Had we the powders for the

rheumatism? did we take cinchona and nitrate of potass? not that I think that it will do us much good, or anything else; your stamina's all gone. What with the bullets and the gout, Commodore, you have had your time; but we have a reputation to maintain—you must be treated *secundum artem*."

"If I could be permitted humbly to insinuate a remark——"

"You cannot be permitted, Mr. Rubasore. Time is valuable. One person should speak only at once; your turn will come. I shall keep you quiet, then—your turn will come, sir; you will talk yourself into an asthma, you will, sir, if you thus persist in continuous speech. How do we get on with our podagra, Commodore?—no occasion for saying a word—we must continue the colchicum. *Pro re nata sumendus*."

"Mark ye me!" roared out the Commodore, making, at the same time, everything rebound on the table, by striking it violently:

“ I will be heard in my own house ; this is rank mutiny. Rebecca, come from behind Mr. Rubasore’s chair.”

“ I sha’n’t, father : such a pleasant, nice gentleman he is, and talks so good-naturedly, all the time, trying to amuse you, father. And those nice young gentlemen on the left—you don’t see them ; they have been making all manner of faces, this half-hour, and been trying to look like three monkeys—they almost succeeded. You don’t know, papa, how much it improved the natural expression of their faces ; do it again, gentlemen.”

“ Yes, dear Miss Becky, if you’ll come and sit by us,” said the most conceited ass of the three ; “ we have something so funny and droll to show you—hav’n’t we, Bob ?”

“ What, anything droller than your squint, or funnier than your friend’s crooked legs ? Oh ! then I’ll come, with all my heart :” and she bounded across the room, and stood near them.

It must not be supposed that, during all this time, Doctor Ginningham was silent. O no! he was vociferously explaining to Mr. Underdown the merits of the two opposite systems that were then distracting the medical world.

“ ‘Bleed, bleed, bleed,’ say the Clinests,” bawled out the Doctor, pompously caning his words, as they were uttered; “bleed, until the danger of bleeding be greater than the danger of the disease. ‘Feed, feed, feed,’ say the Brownists: man is a fire-place—heap on the fuel, that the fire may burn the more brightly. Opium and brandy for ever!”

“Doctor Ginningham, Doctor Ginningham, may I be allowed to speak in my own house?”

“Yes, in moderation—and when I have done. Now, the merits of the Clinests——”

“When he has done! then there is no hope. If its to be a struggle of lungs, let’s try:” so, clapping the palm of his right hand to his mouth, he bellowed forth, in a voice so terrifically loud that it seemed to shake the house,

“ Turn the hands up, and read the articles of war.”

The astounded guests were silent for some seconds, and then all, with the exception of the two men of physic, burst into laughter.

“ May I be allowed to speak now, gentlemen? You see the old Commodore has some fight in him yet. Now, Doctor, tell me plainly, without any of your Tom Cox’s traverse sailing, shall you ever be able to fit me out again, in a serviceable manner ?”

“ Well then, frankly, never. You have not nine months’ life in you.”

“ Then, by G—d, I’ll die afloat.”

“ You *will* talk so much. Now, let me ask you a few questions. When I said you had not nine months’ life in you, I meant, if you persevere in your defiance of all the rules I lay down for you, and refuse all the medicine that I order my good friend here to send in to you.”

“ Well, if I obey you implicitly, how

much longer than nine months may I hope to hang out?"

"Perhaps ten."

"Thank ye. Becky, ring for the rum and cold water."

"I am sole mistress to-day, father; you sha'n't have it—do you hear that?"

"Now, Sir Octavius, what mean you?—You act against my orders—you drink against my orders—and you talk against my orders. Is this the way to treat your medical adviser?—it is a downright insult; a man too, like myself, of great landed property. Let us, Calumbo, ask this injurious old gentleman a few questions, and then we'll depart—we will leave him, Calumbo, a memorable victim to his own obstinacy. Sir Octavius, you reject the advice I offer you in my multiplied visits?"

"But I pay for it," said the old Commodore, gruffly.

"Good, so far is very good; and you never take the medicine that I direct my friend

here, Calumbo, to send in to you so profusely."

"But I pay for it."

"Good again—but only good in part. Now I tell you, that one hundredth portion of this medicine would have done you more good than the whole, had you attended to my orders as to your diet. You fuddle yourself with rum-and-water—eat salt junk—and you pay for that, too. Don't say a word. If you are my patient obey and hear; if not, I consign you to your grog and your grave,—I, Doctor Ginningham."

"Wish I had him on blue water."

As speaking was absolutely necessary to the Doctor, and a listener, though not such a *sine qua non*, most acceptable, he turned himself to Mr. Underdown, and continued haranguing the patient recipient of his pompous absurdities, whilst Mr. Rubasore, seizing the opportunity, began joyously to apply the mental torture to the old Commodore.

“ My dear Sir Octavius, don't you know the news?—such glorious news! It will give you such pleasure to hear it—the most splendid naval victory yet on record?”

“ Hailstones and thunder!—I am all attention.”

“ Pity you're not afloat now, Commodore; but the doctors all say you are laid up—a mere wreck—a broken-up body, with a mind partaking of the same decay—”

“ The liars! how dare you, sir—”

“ Remember, my dear neighbour and Commodore, *I* don't say so.”

“ You had better not.”

“ But they do say that you will never get afloat—and your gout seems as unconquerable as your relish for rum-and-water, and your rheumatism sticks to you like your taste for tobacco. I say nothing, out of great regard to you, about that peculiarly touch-and-go wound on the head. But, under all the circumstances, do you really wish for another command?”

“ Do I wish it—just heaven knows how fervently ! ‘The sea, the blue, the open sea, would be paradise to me. Have I not been suspiciously dismissed from the service ? Am I not haunted ashore by a dearly-beloved sister, who is running about the country but a little better than mad ? What has the land to give me but ennui, disgust, and misery ? The sea, sir, would cure me ; it is the want of it, and that alone, that has made me the poor, sottish beast that I appear to be. The blue, open, green sea, almost cradled me ; it was the hunting-ground, the sport, the happiness of my manhood ; from it, I require the only solace for my old age ; the grave for this wounded body when its harassed soul shall quit it joyfully. And yet you ask me if I wish another command. Be a man, sir, and mock me no more.”

All this was said with a startling energy, and a dignity so natural, that it made every one in the room mute, not excepting the loquacious Doctor. Rebecca, with a big tear in each

eye, stole up to his side, and stealthily kissed his brown hand, and whispered in his ear, "You are a dear, noble father, after all."

This unexpected ebullition of feeling on the part of the battle-scarred and weather-beaten sailor produced a rather awkward pause, which leisure, Mr. Rubasore amiably employed in collecting his venom, which he poured, at length, thus into the ear of his victim.

"You have uttered very noble sentiments, Commodore, and they do you infinite honour. But what are words—actions are what you require, to set you right with your king and your country? I am afraid, considering the debilitated state of your body, and other cogent reasons, that the opportunity for those actions will never more be given you. I regret it—you regret it—we all regret it; but is it not true?"

"I fear me 'tis true."

"Well, there is comfort for you yet. That gallant fellow who superseded you in the com-

mand of the flying squadron; that gallant fellow, whom you so much admire, and ought to love so much, has gained this splendid victory with which all London is resounding. I got the Gazette this morning by express. I find there will be a general illumination in London; of course, you will light up at Trestletree Hall, gloriously. The county will expect it. Shall I read you the despatch from the Gazette? I knew that you would be overcome with joy."

The quiet Underdown rose abruptly from his seat, and placing himself directly before the tormentor, looked sternly in his face. There was nothing there upon which the most punctilious duellist could hang a quarrel. All was smiling, courteous, and serene. The humble and devoted friend unclenched his fists, and turning to the Commodore, placed his hand upon the old gentleman's shoulder, and looking upon him with almost woman's fondness, touchingly said,

"You rejoice in this victory, my friend?"

"I do, most sincerely. Do let the house be,

to-night, one blaze of light. Tell my steward to spread tables on the lawn, be as liberal of my ale as water. Invite my tenants, and turn away no one from my gates. Now, Mr. Rubasore, I'll trouble you to read that despatch."

"Glorious, papa! glorious, papa!" said Beckey, jumping about frantically with joy.

The utter failure of this stroke of malice caused Mr. Rubasore to look in the face as if he had recently swallowed poison; he did, however, as he was commanded.

* Now this day, that had begun so quietly and so unimportantly, and almost so inauspiciously, was fated to be a memorable epoch in the life of the old Commodore.

More than once a personal fracas has happened in drawing-rooms the best regulated and most recherchés. We have already shown the state of disarrangement in which the Commodore suffered everything to remain about his establishment, and the wildness of character that circumstances had given to his

only and spoiled daughter. Need we then be surprised that something like a personal encounter should ensue, even in the drawing-room of a rich English baronet, when we consider the combustible natures of some of the persons in it, the want of knowledge of the usages of society among others, and the total absence of amalgamation in the dispositions of all.

The three young gentlemen who had paid this visit to the Commodore, under the kindly auspices of Mr. Rubasore, in order to quiz, had, as yet, no great triumph to record. One of them, who had an inferior talent for drawing caricatures, had been, for the most part of the morning, earnestly employed in making a very outrageous one of our naval friend; and not only outrageous, but also offensive.

It was just completed as Mr. Rubasore had completed the reading of the despatch. The three giggling young gentlemen, too much encouraged, we are sorry to say, by the levity of Miss Rebecca, beckoned her to them, and, in

exultation, the artist showed the sketch to her slyly. For an instant, she coloured up with the deep flush of indignation, and the next, applied, upon the face of the designer of the gouty Commodore, one of the most unsophisticated, measureless slaps that ever echoed in chamber or hall. It was given with the sturdy strength of a milkmaid, and the activity of a Columbine. The receiver was silent from the excessive smarting of the blow; the other two exclaimed, starting up, one of them, "Demnishion! An insult under his own roof, by Ged!"

The other. "We caun't retuliant upon a femaull—dawmmee, Commodoure, there's our caurds—dawnnaution!"

"Knock 'em down, knock 'em down, father, with your crutch. See what game they've been making of you in this paper."

Demnishion and Dawnnaushion, attended by their friend Blisteredcheek, began moving towards the door, out of the expected "wiff and wind," as Shakspeare has it, of the warrior's

crutch, when they were arrested by Underdown, saying,

“ I am excessively agitated, gentlemen ; you see that I am all of a tremble—these scenes unman me quite ; but why will you thus make me display my weakness, and put this necessity upon me, of leading you one by one by the nose before my respectable friend, and thus making you singly and severally beg his pardon for the unwarrantable liberty that you have taken in endeavouring to hold him up to ridicule to his own daughter ? Doctor Gunningham, you’ll keep the door.”

“ Dawmnaushion !”

“ Demnishment !”

“ Come, sir, I must begin with you.”

“ Never mind the puppies,” said our friend, good-naturedly ; “ there is really some talent in the sketch, though they might have spared me the lower tail.”

“ It is my affair now, Commodore ; so, sir, are you ready ?” said the meek Underdown.

As he was ready, and as the other two were also ready, they made their apologies, and protested upon their honours that they meant no offence ; and thus, for a moment, a hollow peace having been proclaimed, all the guests were about to depart, no doubt to boast, in the provincial town, how excellently well they had quizzed that sea-brute, the fighting old Commodore.

Mr. Rubasore, yet unconscious of the noxious addition to his cue, had also risen with his three protégés and tyros in the art of ingeniously tormenting, when they were all suddenly stopped by curiosity at seeing the servant bring in an immense official letter, with the usual bountiful display of sealing-wax, made gorgeous by the Admiralty seal. Curiosity suspended their movement. Every eye was fixed upon the old Commodore.

“ By your leave, gentlemen,” said he, a little tremulously ; then pinning down the document to the table with his iron, he commenced

ploughing up the envelope with but little respect to the clerkly nicety with which it had been folded. The enclosure was short and pithy. His one eye sparkled, his brow flushed, his iron fin began to labour in the air, and his weather-beaten cheeks curdled up with all manner of mysterious twitches. The spectators could not decide, as yet, whether the worthy old gentleman was under the influence of a paroxysm of pleasure or pain, or whether the letter had brought him bad or good news.

He slapped the letter on the table, and his open hand strongly upon it; his eye twinkled round the room, and now there could be no mistaking its expression; it was fiercely ecstatic: it fell upon Rebecca who had approached him; he caught her to his bosom with a jerk of his hook, and giving her a kind, warm kiss, said softly, "Bless thee, my child!" Then springing upon his legs, regardless of gout, unmindful of rheumatism, and in utter contempt for lumbago, flinging his crutches from him, and thereby

breaking the shins of Mr. Rubasore, he lifted up his voice and roared,

“ Hip, hip, hip, hurrah ! I’m a whole man again. Well, hearty, young, you dogs, young. Will no one fling the liniment at Calumbo’s head ? Underdown, Horace Underdown, I say, shy the colchicum at the doctor’s nose. Who wants physic ?—not I—hurrah, my boys ; the old Commodore’s out of dock again, rigged out all a tanto—yards square, colours flying, every rope hauled taut. Order up the champagne by dozens, keep the doors, not a soul slips his cable ; we’ll get drunk—only a very little drunk—upon it—shall we not, my dear friends ? Now, now, now, now, for one huzza more.—

The old Commodore’s RE-APPOINTED !”

None there, though there were envious and evil-minded ones among them, could refuse the cheer. Nine times was it repeated ; the grave Dr. Gunningham, for once laying aside his gravity, timed the shouts by the motion of his gold-headed cane. The news spread like the

cholera morbus; first the servants, and then the villagers caught it, and, as it appeared to be a day of license, the lawn before the drawing-room windows was soon filled with all the jolly dogs of the neighbourhood, their wives and children; and, almost as soon as the champagne was circulating in the apartment, foaming jugs of ale were being liberally handed out, and passing from mouth to mouth among the unbidden guests.

It was a drouhty summer's morning, and good news is proverbially thirsty. Besides, the poor are prudent, and apt to drink to provide for the time when they will be thirsty hereafter.

It was now in vain that Dr. Ginningham asked for leave to speak, and equally in vain that he bid his patient be silent. Unregarded did he learnedly harangue about a determination of blood to the head, and was gloomily eloquent upon phrenitis, mania, and synocha. The old Commodore swore he was quite well again; and, to prove it, insisted upon dancing,

and that all his guests should dance with him. The baronet was guilty of a thousand extravagances, often growing furiously angry when any one skulked his glass.

Lunch was ordered in and partaken of. Bread, cheese, and cold meat were handed outside among the people. Lunch was removed, and still Sir Octavius refused to part with his guests. At length, this wild sederunt was concluded in a manner the most ludicrous in the world. Sterne, for thy wit, Rabelais, for thy humour to describe it. I, the ancient mariner, saw it ; for I dropped in, in the midst of these orgies.

A roar of laughter, and a shout of joy, welcomed my entrance. They were all standing round the table, the old Commodore at one end, Mr. Underdown at the other. Under the Commodore's left arm was nestled the head and shoulders of his lovely daughter, her singularly beautiful countenance actually burning with the intoxication of mirth, and, must I say

it?—a little with that of champagne also. The madness of wine seemed to be *ensouled* on her features. O how different was that inspired look of the spirit's enthusiasm from the vulgar excitement of ebriety! She seemed a bacchante, but her cup flowed not with the gross wine of earth, but brimmed with the pure nectar of the heavens.

Thus they were all standing, the Doctor speaking, and pushing his cane backwards and forwards perpendicularly before him, as usual. He was showing cause why this fifteenth toast should not be a bumper, inasmuch, as he had not dined, moreover, as he had many more patients to see, and, furthermore, for the best of all reasons, because he would not. Now, as this particular toast, like every other toast that had been drunk, was the most particular and important ever yet given, or that ever could be given hereafter, and, as it was to the hero of the Nile, the old Commodore insisted that he should drink it honestly in a bumper, every

drop, without either mental or bodily reservation.

The Doctor was still eloquently hesitant.

“Now, Becky, my darling,” said the Baronet, “you see that Doctor, and you see that glass in his hand ; you also see that beautifully curled, well-powdered wig on the head of that Doctor. Now, mark you me, darling ; if, before you can count a hundred, you don’t see that glass filled to the brim with wine, and that wine then poured through the lower part of that wig-crowned vacuity he calls a head, pluck me off that wig and fling it out of the window.”

Mr. Rubasore very condescendingly went and opened the French window that gave out upon the lawn. How kind of Mr. Rubasore to forward the mischievous frolics of other people ! Ah, Mr. Rubasore, there’s an old proverb, that those who have glass windows should not set the fashion of flinging stones. At that moment, you were quite unconscious of the fearful ride that you would, before many more minutes had

escaped, be compelled to take; that you were too soon to emulate, to surpass Tam o' Shanter's race.

The frolic-loving Rebecca had, for these occasions, a method of counting of her own.

"I'll drink no more, Calumbo; already are *muscæ volitantes* floating in my vision. Go home directly, good Calumbo, and make me a saline draught, to which add another, musk mixture one ounce, with thirty drops of sulphuric ether. I would write it, but verily my hand is unsteady. I'll drink no more."

"Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety, *one hundred*," said Rebecca, running round and snatching off the wig.

"Assuredly my wig is gone. Calumbo, where is my wig?"

But before any reply could be made to this very natural question, amidst the roars of laughter of the company, Rebecca flew behind Mr. Rubasore, as if for the purpose of finding

there, protection from the rather unsteady pursuit of the bald-headed physician.

“Don’t let him touch me, Mr. Rubasore; pray don’t, there’s a dear, good man.”

“By no means, my dear girl; he must take a joke as well as the rest of us. Methinks he looks marvellous wise without his wig, yet droll withal.”

In the meantime, the wicked hoyden, with her hand inside the wig, was kneading very carefully its powdered curls into a union, like marriage, that nothing but death could part, with the bird-lime and cobbler’s wax at the extremity of Mr. Rubasore’s cue. The operation was short, but effectual. The gordian knot was inseparable.

“Now, Doctor, there hangs your wig; take it.”

Mr. Rubasore flung himself round to look for it; and there was the snowy appendage waving gracefully to and fro, across his own back.

The mirth of the company grew furious, whilst the Doctor, spluttering forth bad Latin, and cursing Mr. Rubasore with all manner of nauseous prescriptions, began to tug at his wig. Mr. Rubasore grew pallid with anger, and the contention was mutual.

However, the junction was too complete. As the Doctor was, by far, the more powerful man of the two, he determined that, however soiled, his wig should remain intact; he therefore roared lustily for a pair of scissars, in order, as he openly avowed, to cut off Mr. Rubasore's tail.

With what an amiable celerity Miss Rebecca Bacuissart furnished the doctor with the shearing implement! Sweet child!

This was enough for Mr. Rubasore. He, considerate man, had opened the glass-door for the egress of the doctor's wig. The wig passed through it with an astonishing rapidity. With the glittering forfex extended in his hand, the doctor gave chase. Both the pursued and the pursuer ran the better for the champagne.

All the party followed, the view halloo was given, and, as a matter of course, every Englishman, as well as he could for laughter, commenced betting.

Little regarding his gout, the Commodore got upon the lawn without crutches, and sinking into a rustic chair, remained convulsed with laughter, bawling out for fair play, whenever he could speak. A large party of ladies and gentlemen, who, as news spreads fast, had dropped in to congratulate, now appeared, and joined the chase. Never was a hunt better attended.

In the first place, the hunted and the hunter had to thread their way through the groups of men, women, and boys, that had been assembled on the lawn. When these had been passed, of course they fell into the race. The shouts seemed to shake the very skies. "Run it, bare-pole!" "Go it, pig-tail!" "Two to one on long-shanks!" "Done." "Three to four on pill-box." "Taken." "Turn to the left, squire—there's a ditch before him." "Cut

him off, doctor, he must make a bend this way;" and such-like encouragement, with the clapping of hands, added to the exhilaration of the scene.

Droll was the sight at seeing the bare-pated doctor racing in his court-dress, but still more droll was the flying wig-bearer. Now the white encumbrance streamed forth from behind him, and now it bobbed against his hips, covering the rounded extremity of his back with powder. Now they were lost amongst the shrubberies; now they issued in full view upon the grass-plat, and now they were only partially seen gliding swiftly between the trunks of trees.

They were well matched for a lengthened chase. If Mr. Rubasore was the more active, Dr. Gunningham was the more athletic; and, as bottom seemed to be likely to carry it, the chase it appeared, in all probability, would end in favour of the pursuer. But a lucky thought inspired the pursued. He would risk his life for his tail; for, thought he, if I could survive the ignominy of losing it, and could bear up

against the jeers of the whole county, yet too little would remain to me of this life ever to hope that another would grow.

The doctor also was committed in the pursuit. As it was, the ridicule on both parties was complete. Nothing worse on that score could happen. The only way to come out of this absurdity at all with honour was to come out of it triumphantly. He must rescue his wig. He must commit not a "rape of the lock," but of the whole of Mr. Rubasore's cue. Thus actuated, each party pursued and fled with unabated ardour.

The man wrongfully, yet unintentionally, possessed of the wig, at length made for the lodge. Standing at the gate were three or four steeds, each held by a little boy. No questions were asked, Mr. Rubasore leaped upon one, whose he cared not; the doctor upon another, in his thin satins, and away, away!

Up the side of the hill, across the high road, through the meadow, along the skirts of the

forest, away they went—away, away. The pendant wig now streamed out fairly, like the tail of a boy's kite with a great paper tassel at the end of it. All of the pedestrians were now thrown out, and but two of the horsemen can keep in view. They are mad with fear with rage, with wine;—yes, certainly with the last, for now it has begun to take full effect upon them; both parties begin to feel an excitement that is wild and pleasing. They now urge forward their failing horses by the loudest and most uncouth cries. They are again on the main road. The horses in vain attempt to cross it, but rush onwards towards the market-town; it is market-day: they plunge through the dividing and shouting multitude—many horsemen, not knowing the cause of this strange spectacle, join in the pursuit. Gilpin's race, is a most remarkable one—but how much would it have been surpassed by the wig-race, had we but a Cowper to sing it!

At last, Mr. Rubasore's horse, wearied by the

excessive run, and maddened by the noise behind him, no longer obeys the feeble hand of his rider, but swerving from the high-road, runs up to the saddle-bow in a sloughy and muddy horse-pond. The doctor and his posse of attendants pull up as they shoot past; at length, they all assemble at the verge of the muddy-pool, and call upon Mr. Rubasore to come out. The horse's hoofs are embedded in the stiff bottom, and the unfortunate equestrian, up to his hips in mud and water, is left to cool upon his ride. The wig is now one mass of foetid mud. It is irretrievably spoiled.

The crowd now looked to the doctor for some explanation. He sate still upon his panting steed. He then looked round him deliberately, and, before he spoke, he took from his pocket a silk handkerchief, and placed it over his bald head, tying it under his chin. He took snuff, and then condescended to speak.

“Gentlemen, I am Doctor Gunningham, of

Pharmacy Close, in the county of Hertfordshire."

At this solemn announcement many of the spectators took off their hats, who did not, till then, recognise in the heated, bald, and dirt-bespattered figure before them the renowned and affluent doctor.

"Gentlemen," he continued, "that dirty, black thing attached to the back of that dirty man, on that dirty horse, in that dirty slough, is my wig. Anybody may have it for the trouble of fetching it. Silence that man, he is going to be absurd. Let some one run to the Crown, and order me a chaise-and-four—a chaise-and-four for Doctor Ginningham, of Pharmacy Close. That individual in the pond, and without the hat, will, doubtless, in due time, be taken from his present predicament. Let some discreet person put him to bed, and I shall now prescribe for him."

He then, not at all moved by the merriment of the mob, took out his pocket-book, and

forthwith wrote a prescription, with full directions for treatment, which he placed in the hand of the most respectable looking person near him.

“ See to it, my good friend,” he continued, “ but don’t talk ; should fever supervene, take care that that dirty individual in the pond loses at least fourteen ounces of blood. Where is somebody from the Crown ?—Let these horses, mine as well as the one in the mud, be properly looked to, and taken care of, at my expense, — mine, Doctor Ginningham of Pharmacy Close ; and, when in a condition to travel, let them be returned to my very good friend, but most refractory patient, Sir Octavius Bacuisart, of Trestletree Hall. Gentlemen, I thank you all for the profound attention with which you have heard me ; it shows a discriminating and an enlightened audience. Let the chaise be brought here. Good. Having, my good friends, so kindly attended to me, pray attend a little to my fellow-traveller. I wish you all

a very good day. Boys," stepping into the chaise, "an extra half-crown for good speed. Home—Pharmacy Hall."

And away went this magnificent talker, hard rider, and imperturbable stoic, amidst the laughter and the cheers of the audience, to get a new wig, and make another appearance about the time of dinner at Trestletree Hall.

As to Mr. Rubasore, we shall leave him in the horse-pond, as black, as immovable, and as silent as the equestrian statue at Charing Cross. We shall not even show how he was extricated, but leave him in his dirty plight in disgust. A meet fate for all those who would attempt to *quix the old Commodore*.

YE CRITICS, TAKE WARNING.

CHAPTER V.

“ The fuel that feeds a vengeance, oft consumes
Th’ altar where th’ unholy fire is cherish’d ;
And often, too, th’ officiating priest.”

OLD PLAY.

So good a despatch did the Doctor make, that, cool as a cucumber, with a wig whiter and better curled, if possible, than that which he had chased so many miles, he made his appearance a full half-hour before dinner, among the numerous guests that the old Commodore had hastily collected, to commemorate this really happy occasion of the naval victory, and his

new re-appointment. All was heartiness, goodwill, and hilarity. The Doctor's entrance was greeted with shouts.

But, all of a sudden, the Doctor was (to use, in us, so pardonable a sea phrase) taken aback by a vision that shocked him with horror and surprise. The ineffable presumption! There stood the hitherto silent shadow, the apothecary Calumbo, speaking, and not only speaking, but speaking energetically; not only speaking energetically, but enforcing this energy by perpendicularly pushing backwards and forwards the very gold-headed cane—the thrice-hallowed medical sceptre of the Doctor himself. He was acting the physician *in petto*. His back being partially turned to the Doctor, he saw not his entrance.

The doctor spoke to no one; he advanced—the voluble apothecary nor saw nor heard him. He was in the midst of a dissertation on the *solar pleuris*. Great was the eclipse that followed. The man with the diploma plucked the golden

cane from the orator. He was instantaneously mute. The virtue of science and the beauty of eloquence had gone from him. He was again nothing more than a mere silent pestle, to grind up drugs at the bidding of one greater than he. Doctor Gunningham was once more himself. He could prescribe—heavens! how he could prescribe!

This little pantomime heightened the general mirth. It was in vain that the man learned in medicine commanded all and every one, on their allegiance as patients, to be silent. Every one was too happy to let even the doctor have all the talk to himself. However, amidst all this confusion of merriment, the Commodore did contrive to get one pertinent answer from Doctor Gunningham.

“Boatswain’s mate ahoy,” roared the Stentorian voice of the tar. “Pipe all hands to silence;” then, whistling shrilly, he bawled out still more loudly, “Silence, fore and aft.” And silence ensued, accordingly.

“ Well, where did you leave the chase, Doctor ?” said Sir Octavius.

“ Up to the middle in a horse-pond.”

“ And the wig ?”

“ Hanging at the end of the disagreeable man’s tail. Let it go—he rode hard for it. He may have it: the wig was dirty. What whig is there that will not hang on by a tail ?”

We need not dwell upon the prolonged festivities of that evening, nor chronicle the claret that was drunk in-doors, and the ale without. The illumination, considering the shortness of the notice, was most respectable: and, though the number of variegated lamps might have been exceeded, had due time for preparation been permitted, yet the defect was not perceived, as, when they were lighted, most of those who looked upon them, saw double, and to many were the powers of vision so beautifully multiplied, that they saw the lamps reach up to the skies, and mingle with the stars; and some

of them, astonished at this miracle, fell down before it, and were found quietly sleeping in the sunshine on the following morning.

The day after this fête, the old Commodore descended into the breakfast parlour, an altered, a very altered man. The old placidity was again seen upon his ample and manly brow, the pristine fire again lighted up his eye, and all his features, usually so relaxed with ennui, or twisted up by petulance, regained their natural stamp of energy. His gout, though not actually cured, was infinitely better, and his other ailments had disappeared, with that worst of all diseases, soul-corroding apathy. The alteration of the outward man was so visible, that Rebecca burst out, the moment he entered, with, "Bless me, papa, what have you been doing with yourself?"

"Amending myself, in many things, my dear Becky, and I will strive to better myself in all. My dear Horace," speaking to Mr. Underdown, "we have been like fools in a

trance. Look at this beautiful creature, the choicest pulse of my heart, now just starting into womanhood. Oh, Horace, my friend, tell me—is she what she ought to be—what she might be?”

“What is the matter now with me, father?”

Mr. Underdown mournfully shook his head.

“The fault is mine, my beloved daughter—the fault is mine. My dear Underdown, I am not equal to it—lecture her on the impropriety of her behaviour yesterday.”

“By no means: we all shared in the offence. The rancorous provocation of Mr. Rubasore was but rightly served, though I am really sorry that our little beauty—Miss Bacuissart, I ought to have said—was made so actively the instrument. However, it was an hour of great exhilaration, and we have no character to lose in this establishment, as far as regards the proprieties. We must, however, gain one; and that right speedily. In the first place,

Sir Bacuissart, what is the nature of your orders?"

"I am to repair, forthwith, to Plymouth, and immediately take the command of the ships named here in the margin: a gallant squadron,"—handing over the official letter to his friend.

"Yes, I see it is, indeed. There is a very laughable postscript, in the hand-writing of the first lord. It is couched in very friendly terms, however."

"Oh, let me see, let me see," said the eager young lady.

"You will not understand it, if you do. It is, however, to inform your father, that, whenever he may wait upon his majesty, or come to the king's court, it will be expected of him, that he come in full uniform, at all points."

"I am sure father always looks best in his gold-laced coat, his three-cornered cocked-hat, and his large sword hanging by his side; that is to say, when he screws on his visiting band, with the white glove. O he's a braw-looking

man then, and his scars seem quite beautiful. The first lord needn't have taken the trouble to tell papa how to dress. That's ~~very~~ officious, I should think."

"Well, Becky dear, if you'll be a good girl, and try to be a lady, I'll dress myself, and you too, as long as you live, as fine as you like."

"O the good papa," said she, kissing him again and again. "Now I'm going to ask you such a favour: I do so wish to finish my education; I see so little society, and I am afraid I am rather bold. I do so want to break myself of that fault. Will you?"

"There's a dear Becky—to be sure. What can I deny my blooming, my bright-eyed girl?"

"I knew you would: it will improve me so. Take me to sea with you."

Both gentlemen began earnestly whistling different tunes. Miss Matilda, who had, a little before, made her appearance, flung up her arms in dismay, and rang for her Hungary

water. Eau de Cologne had not yet found its way to country places, in England.

“Take you to sea with me!” at last said the father; “for what, my sweet child?”

“In order to complete my education,” said she, dropping him the demurest curtsey that she had been pleased to make a very, very long time.

“Are you mad, Becky?”

“O no, father. But I remember what you said about poor Augustus.”

All the Commodore’s hilarity was gone in a moment.

“Hush, hush,” said the well-intentioned Underdown. But the young lady rattled on.

“Because, papa, I want to take care of you, and hinder you from flogging the midshipmen. How could you have the heart?”

“Come here, my dear child. I did not think that you could make me so miserable, on a day that ought to be so happy to me. It is all for the best; it is the smiting of a

gentle hand. Hear me, Rebecca: I will never flog a young gentleman again; nor a man either, provided that any other alternative is left me. I am now a wiser, and if I am not a better man for the dearly-bought wisdom, I shall deserve the hate of my own child; which, God, in his mercy, forefend. I love you most dearly, Rebecca, and you know it. I cannot take you to sea. Little would be my regard for you, had I the power, and did so."

"You won't flog the midshipmen any more, father, will you?"

"No, you little minx. I trust, Underdown, that I am an altered man."

"Of course, I go with you?" said the friend, affectionately.

"I hardly know. I had some thoughts of leaving you here, to watch our Becky. But, Mrs. Oliphant is what the world calls a prudent woman. We must really think of making a lady of this spoiled child."

After much discussion of the nature of the

above, it was finally arranged that Mr. Underdown should join the Commodore, in a few days, at Plymouth, after seeing Mrs. Oliphant fully established at Trestletree Hall.

Towards evening, the Commodore took a most affectionate leave of his sobbing daughter, who promised all manner of reforms.

It was lucky for Sir Octavius that he made his escape as he did, for, the very next day, Lady Astell, with her accustomed parade of woe, came to ask her son at his hands. As usual, every deference was paid to her. She was received by Mr. Underdown, and Rebecca also was, which seldom was the case, present.

She stood, according to her custom, in the centre of the room, with her dead impassive look. From all approach towards the usual courtesies of life, she shrank with apparent horror. To the many well-intentioned inquiries of Mr. Underdown, she made no reply, but after due lapses of silence, she asked for her son's murderer. It was in vain that she was assured

that he had departed. She believed the assertion only to be an excuse, and that her brother feared to meet her. She had recourse to her usual conduct in these matters, that of patience.

Now Rebecca's awe of her aunt had considerably decreased. She had heard her conduct spoken of with pity, yet condemnation, and that, viewed in the best light, it was, she knew, held to be little better than insanity. Lady Astell's aspect was too forbidding to warrant any approach to familiarity on the part of the niece. Indeed, the latter was too high-spirited to attempt it. But, though she did not warm towards the gloomy intruder with affection, she grew warm with indignation, when she saw her mild and gentle friend Underdown treated, tacitly, as a liar.

At length, vexed beyond endurance, she walked up abruptly to her aunt, and said, " Pray, Lady Astell, when are you going?"

“ When, miss, I have seen the— your father.”

“ Don’t you hear that he set off for Plymouth yesterday?”

“ So young—so beautiful—and so false !”

“ This to me, Lady Astell !—how dare you, madam? When did you know me guilty of falsehood? What you would say to my father, say to me. Make your speech, madam, and depart. I have particular occasion for the use of this apartment.”

“ O Rebecca, do not thus deport yourself towards your aunt,” said Mr. Underdown; “ consider all her sufferings, and her previous kindness to yourself. Respect and pity her.”

“ I do pity her. Why should she think us liars?”

“ I wait for the Commodore,” was the only observation that Lady Astell condescended to make.

“ I assure you solemnly, that your brother

is now more than a hundred miles from hence," said Mr. Underdown.

"This is what you term, perhaps, a pious deceit."

"I take my God to witness it is true," said her old lover, with all the solemnity of an oath.

"Then I must pursue him."

"Stop!" screamed out Miss Rebecca. "Let me tell you, madam, it is useless. He has escaped from your barbarity. He is again where he ought to be. He, at least, is now in his right station, in the command of a gallant ship."

"What! can this be true?—to perpetrate other murders."

"Lady Astell, I do not like to hear my father stigmatized as a murderer—I tell you this quietly. However, I must not much mind this, as your words should have been uttered in a madhouse."

"For shame, for shame, Rebecca!" said Mr. Underdown, rising angrily from his chair.

Now, for the first time, even for years, did Lady Astell betray emotion. The blood came rapidly to her marble cheek, and as rapidly vanished. Her brow next became suffused with a deep flush, whilst the lower part of her face remained of a deadly white. She was making great efforts not to tremble. Her distress was pitiable. She attempted twice to speak, but failed. At length, her words were audible, but they were no longer the cold and passionless tones with which she was wont to make her stern demand. They were singularly tremulous and tender, and spoken amidst the gushing of her tears.

“Horace,” said she, addressing Mr. Underdown, “do the world believe me mad?”

He made no reply, but buried his face in his hands.

“Yes, it is madness in this world of corrupted hearts to have the feelings of a mother. O Augustus! how soon have all forgotten you!”

“ We hav’n’t,” screamed out Miss Rebecca, ready to fling herself into her aunt’s arms, and to beg her pardon. But Lady Astell, finding all her resolution fast giving way, turned hastily and departed, leaving the young lady and Mr. Underdown to an unexpected *tête-à-tête*.

There was a pause for some minutes. At length Mr. Underdown observed, “ Rebecca, you were guilty of great cruelty. I think, however, that you have done good. You have given to Lady Astell’s mind another and a far healthier train of thought. May it work upon her to happiness—or, at least, produce some approach to serenity. When she next comes, walk up to her at once, embrace and kiss her. How noble a soul is perverted !”

“ You know that I am to be a good girl now ; to learn everything, and make myself a lady. So I will do just as you tell me. I love her dearly, after all ; but it is cruel of her to say that nobody thinks about Augustus but

herself. I hope she'll come again soon, and we'll try once more to make a good aunt of her."

But she came not, and thus all her desires of improving Lady Astell became nugatory.

CHAPTER VI.

“She was a frigate tight and gay,
As ever dash’d aside the spray,
Or conquer’d in a well-fought fray—
The saucy Belladonna.”

WE have hitherto kept tolerably close to the skirts of the old Commodore. We must now beg to leave him for a little while, travelling post to Plymouth, once more to receive his ardently desired command; and let us repair to a quiet bay, on the south-western coast of England, and stopping a few minutes to contemplate the loveliness of the scene, we must then introduce to the reader another naval personage, in the character of a very young captain of a very fine frigate.

There the frigate lies at single anchor, with her head down channel, riding, on account of the strength of the tide, with a taut hawse, about a mile and a half from the shore. She is a most beautiful craft; long, and sits rather low in the water, and yet she is so stiff under sail, that it must blow hard indeed when she can no longer use her lower-deck guns. Her captain, and all on board of her, have long wished to meet a French two-decker in a gale of wind that would oblige the enemy to close her lower-deck ports. There is no doubt but that the saucy little Belladonna would give a good account of her.

Her masts are very tant, and rake, perhaps, a little too much aft. Her sails are so accurately and neatly furled, that they seem to be only streaks of white paint on the yards, with a dab of the brush in the middle where the bunt is. Blocks you can see none, and every rope is hauled as taut as a harpstring. She is beautifully painted. Indeed, she has the ap-

pearance of a nobleman's yacht; and were it not for her bristling guns, you would suppose her to be some beautiful pageant, created only to convey gorgeously attired ladies across some smooth and fresh-water lake.

She reposes in stillness and beauty upon the unruffled blue that seems to be beneath her, like an inverted heaven. Nor is the scenery ashore unworthy of this marine view. The two horns of the ~~Ing~~, and but little indented bay, melt gently away into the azure of the distance, on one of which can be descried a ruined castle, with the warm sun-rays struggling through many a rent, where once was window and arched portal. The other horn of the bay is not so picturesque, but much more cheerful; it is loftier, and crowned by wood, nestled among which is a large, though but partially, seen white mansion, in all the glory of excellent repair. The shingly beach along the whole extent of this bay, is, inshore, bounded by fields and orchards, shrubberies and green lawns.

crowded together, and all rich in the splendours of a verdant English June.

We may well ask if there be anything of life in that great ship, lying there so majestically in her stillness. Hark ! a shrill piping is wafted, not unmusically, over the waters, followed by the sound of one hoarse voice—but what words they are, the distance will not permit us to discover. Now the notes of the shrilly fife are heard, and, moved by some unseen agency, a large boat rises from out the frigate, is suspended a half-minute aloft, and a moment after, descends with a gentle splash into the water alongside. It is a pleasure to watch all this in a calm summer's afternoon.

Now thirteen neatly clad figures rattle into the barge. In a moment, the coxswain is at the helm, and the oars are simultaneously tossed up. A slighter figure now steps into the stern-sheets with a gentle jessamy air, and spreads over the seat the ample boat-cloak.

There is more piping. And now a fine ath-

letic young man appears to slide between the side-ropes, and is down in the barge in a moment ; the two bowmen shove the barge off, the oars, at a signal, fall into the water, and the boat rapidly plunges through the sea. This person, with his gold-laced hat shipped fore and aft, is Oliver Oliphant, the nephew of Sir Octavius Bacuissart, a post-captain in the navy, and the eldest son of the late eminent grocer in the Minories. His countenance is eminently handsome, though there is little of the elevation of thought in its expression. You see, at once, that he is brave, generous, and good-tempered, and that he will make an excellent, if not a very intellectual, companion. He is sure to be a great favourite with the ladies. He is a little, very little, conscious of his advantages. He sometimes—when he looks upon the grey-headed officers under him—is himself a little surprised at all the advantages of his position. However, he is a good fellow, and, therefore, should not be scrutinised too narrowly.

He leaps, with the springy bound of youth, from his barge, followed by his attendant, a sort of mongrel servitor, between a sailor and a valet. Now this valet had made himself a character, by trying to support the character of a wit. His master, Captain Oliphant, liked him hugely. The old Commodore hated him in the same proportion. Whenever Peter Drivel, for so he was pleased to be called, came within shot of the old sailor, the first thing he he could lay his hand on always flew at his head. This did not often happen; as Captain Oliphant, as I have before stated, generally gave his uncle as wide a berth as possible. However, Peter took this cannonading always in good part; he would grin—for the Commodore always missed his aim—hurl some vile pun back, by way of returning fire, and disappear.

Now, it is my painful duty to state, that neither Peter Drivel, nor Captain Oliver Oliphant, nor Captain Oliver Oliphant's barge, nor his

frigate, had any business to be just where they were, on that beautiful afternoon in June. Altogether, they ought to have been far, far at sea, in the chops of the channel. The day before, Captain Oliphant had most urbane-ly asked the master of the ship to dine with him, out of his turn; and then asked him, also, with a peculiar intonation of the voice, whether he did not think that the frigate's lower rigging wanted fresh setting up. The master thought so too. So they ran the saucy Belladonna into her present anchorage, for this express purpose. Why they did not set about it immediately, I can't tell.

But this I can tell, that, up at Jaspar Hall, there resided a young lady, with the very romantic name of Rosa; and Jaspar Hall was situated but a short half mile from the beach, where the barge landed the Captain and his faithful servitor.

There was a fine, open, wide, high-road, that led up to Jaspar Hall. But Captain Oliphant

had an aversion to open roads. He was tired of expansive views—enough of them at sea. He wanted ruralities; and so he took a green, little, tortuous, and narrow lane, in order that he might get near the mansion. As to entering that mansion, he would leave it for circumstances to determine. Other parties had seen the arrival of the frigate—had, we fear, expected it.

When Captain Oliphant had got himself clear of the beach, and both he and his servant were buried in the lane, Peter, who was excessively romantic, had fallen considerably in the rear, for the innocent recreation of gathering for himself a nosegay of wild flowers. This botanizing did not then exactly meet the views of his master; so he bawled out, at the top of his voice, to his scholarly servant, “You Peter! Peter Drivel, I say;—heave a head, man. Though it may be right for you to keep in my wake, you should always lie within hail.”

At this seasonable and nautical reproof,

Peter, closing with his master, pricked up his ears. The fit of wishing to be witty came upon him, and he thus shaped his reply—shaped, I call it, for he always shaped and trimmed whatever he said.

“Yes, sir, yes,” said Peter, aloud, and then continued, to himself, thus, “Wake, lie, hail; three excellent words, and I dare not—I will.”

No longer being able to resist mounting his hobby, he was on its back in a moment, and off he galloped, the fear of his master’s cane being before his eyes, notwithstanding. Affecting, after the manner of punsters, not to have heard the Captain, he said, “Did you say, sir, that no one could *lie awake*, when you *hail*?”

This brought his head into danger; for the cane was flourished over it.

“You rascal! shall neither I nor the Commodore ever be able to break you of that detestable habit of always attempting to pun?”

Sirrah, to *rig* out your discourse with puns, is almost as bad as to give a *broadside* of technical terms upon every trivial occasion. I detest it. However, Peter, I'll say no more about it now; we must think of other things. It is quite time that we marked how the *land lies*, *clap our tacks on board*, and *make sail* for Jaspar Hall."

"With submission, sir," said Peter, looking very droll, "when you talk about clapping your *tacks* on board, *tax* your——."

"What! at it again, you incorrigible scoundrel? If you don't bring your tongue to an anchor, and clap a stopper on your impertinence—Heavens and earth! when shall I rid myself of this nautical habit?"

Now, the amiable Captain was much ashamed of his practice of talking quarter-deck and fore-castle language; and, as he had often been laughed at for it by a certain lady, he did all in his power to break himself of it: not cherishing his failing, like his servant Peter.

“ When,” he exclaimed energetically, “ shall I rid myself of this nautical habit—”

“ A habit I call naughty,” said the perverse one, half aloud.

“ —This habit,” continued the Captain, not overhearing Peter, “ of larding my conversation with sea-phrases?” Then, turning to his servant, he said to him, impressively, “ Now, Peter, my good fellow, for once attend to the sense of what I would convey, more than to the words with which I convey it. I appoint you a sort of censor”

“ Yes, sir, to mark when you speak *sense* or only galley-lingo.”

“ Well,” said the Captain resignedly, “ I suppose that it is a sort of disease that the poor fellow cannot rid himself of. I make you a sort of censor, Peter, over my speech; so that, when you find that I am running into naval embellishment, you will give me timely notice, by crying out, very audibly, “ Hem, hem!” which I shall regard

as a kind of signal gun, and immediately *put about upon the other tack.*"

"Hem ! hem !! hem !!!" roared out Peter, with due unction.

"Confound it," said the vexed master; "I see that I shall give the poor fellow occasion to keep his throat clear, and his pipe will soon emulate the boatswain's call."

"Hem ! hem !! hem !!!" again ejaculated the faithful mentor, much pleased with his office.

"No, Peter," said the young officer, in a tone of earnest expostulation; "there you are wrong: I did but make a complimentary comparison. But who is it, Peter, that is coming this way?—our old messenger, farmer Drag. We shall now be able to find how affairs stand at the hall, and thus be able to shape our course accordingly."

"Hem ! hem !! hem !!!" roared out Peter, vociferously; but that was not the worst of it. Voices, as it seemed, close to their right and from

behind the hedges of the lane, echoed the hems! with great glee. Master and man looked at each other for some time in silent amazement, and then simultaneously burst into loud laughter. At length the Captain exclaimed :

“ Peter, this is singular. It would seem that I have commissioned not only you, but the very bushes, to be my monitors. If I am *overhauled* this way, I shall soon be able to *pass muster*.”

“ Hem ! hem !! hem !!! ” again roared Peter, tickled beyond measure at his office.

“ Hem ! hem !! hem !!! ” was chorussed from the bushes. Captain Oliphant began not quite to like it.

“ Jump round, Peter, and see who it is that dares mock us in this manner.”

So, whilst Peter was looking for a gap or a stile, he thus soliloquized: “ Us indeed ! that’s good ! I flatter myself that, when I speak, I excite anything but mockery. I to *xcite* mockery would be *a* sight indeed. Good that ! but nobody hears it.”

Now, whilst the servant is pricking his hands by endeavouring to force his way through the hedge, and the gallant Captain is at a loss to know whether it would be more prudent to go up to Jaspar Hall at once, or to send up a scout to reconnoitre, we will let the reader into the mystery of the echo, and into some other mysteries that it is needful that he should comprehend. The lady with the romantic name, Rosa Belmont, had seen the saucy Belladonna drop her anchor, and, being induced by the fineness of the weather, determined to walk down, by certain green lanes, to the beach, in order that she might have a better view of the ship; at least, that could be the only assignable motive. She took with her her maid, Eleanor Dobson, a young person, whom she had but recently engaged. Now, as the footpaths were better known to them than to the naval gentlemen—for gentleman Peter Drivel always accounted himself—Miss Rosa and her attendant soon met them advancing up the lane. They

turned too, and, with the hedge only between them—they on the footpath in the field—had the advantage of hearing all the discourse upon cacology that we have just narrated. They, being of a charitable and christian nature, humanely gave Peter their assistance in amending his master's forms of speech.

By the time that Captain Oliphant had advanced a hundred yards, Peter overtook him; and, making use of a Latin quotation that he had picked up with his former master, and which he knew he could palm upon his present one, he assured him that he had looked about everywhere, and that the sounds were only “*vox et pretty nell.*”

This was rather a puzzler to the Captain, who, looking grave upon it, sagely remarked, “Ah! I thought there were two of them. Who the devil can Vox and pretty Nell be? Confound their impudence!”

“O the ignorance of these naval commanders!” said Peter, speaking softly to the

palm of his hand, and then, more loudly, to his master, "With all submission, sir, *von et pretty nell* is a Latin quotation from Homer, meaning that the interruption we experienced was a voice and nothing else."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Dr. Peter Drivel!" said the Captain with mock humility. "I had quite forgotten your classical propensities; and I think, when I get you on board again, I shall help you to forget them too."

By this time, a rather loutish-looking, elderly farming-man had joined them. He doffed his hat and scraped his leg to the Captain, and then, walking apart, began an earnest conversation, leaving Peter, at some distance, to concoct as good a pun as he could.

CHAPTER VII.

“Ye gods! annihilate space and time,
And make two lovers happy!”

As it is apparent that we are now in an incipient love affair, it is necessary that my friends should become acquainted with all the interesting incidentals. Rosa Belmont was a dark beauty, with a complexion so clear that you might fancy you saw into it. No blonde could ever boast of a whiter forehead. Her colour, amidst the downiness of her cheeks, was exquisitely rich; and we might also grow eloquent on classically shaped cheeks, which were continually kindling

up with the celestial fire that flowed from the deep light of her intensely black eyes. Upon those eyes it was almost impossible to look philosophically. They were rarely fully opened: the long eyelashes veiled their brightness, and kindly tempered their fire to the beholder. Her hair was of the deepest black, glossy, of the most delicate texture, and exuberant in the extreme. She carried about her, in all her motions, the dignity of thought. She used herself to say, that she was all soul; and she was not aware, at the time, how truly she spoke.

At this time she was just of age; in a few months the guardianship of our acquaintance, Mr. Rubasore, would terminate. She would then become sole mistress of Jaspar Hall, and a somewhat impoverished estate; but quite sufficient for a genteel independence, and which a few years of economy would render unincumbered, and of great value.

This promising estate and this charming young lady it was the intention of Mr. Rubasore

to appropriate to himself. He had, to effect this the more easily, brought Rosa up in great seclusion, and did all in his power to foster in her a romantic spirit. As far as the romance was concerned, he had succeeded admirably ; and, what with his assiduities, his doctrines, and his not suffering her to have many opportunities of forming comparisons, the young lady had, merely in order to supply the vacuum in her imagination, accepted the elderly gentleman as her lover. This was a profound secret, known but to the two concerned.

Mr. Rubasore was clever, insinuating, and, though his hair was grey, had, by no means, a bad person. He dreaded the world's opinion : he seldom spoke of his ward ; and had had her education completed in France. There Rosa, seeing in what manner young ladies are generally disposed of, and flattered by the quarterly visits of her admirer, and fancying that in him was concentrated all of goodness of which human nature can boast, she was well content with her future prospects.

As for Mr. Rubasore, every one said what an attentive and kind guardian he was; so little intrusive, yet always so considerately kind. None knew, when he was thus praised, that he had shamefully tampered with the vanity and inexperience of a child of seventeen, by inveigling her into an engagement to marry him shortly after she became of age. He would not marry her as a minor; not he. There was danger in that, both from the law and for his reputation. He had taken every means in his power to cultivate in his ward a high romantic feeling: he had succeeded wonderfully well. Could one, whose mind was crammed with the follies of constant love, break her plighted troth? O no! thought Mr. Rubasore. Romance has, however, its own version of engagements of the heart, and sometimes construes them unfavourably for the interests of old age and duplicity.

Mr. Rubasore's estate and mansion were in the vicinity of Trestletree Hall. He was looked upon by all his neighbours as a confirmed old

bachelor ; and his visits to France were always ascribed to his proper attention to the welfare of his ward. Now that she had passed her twentieth year, he thought it quite time that she was placed a little more under his surveillance. So he put Jaspar Hall into order, furnished himself with a proper chaperone for Rosa, in the shape of a fat and dependant female cousin, and then brought his ward over to England, and established her in her paternal mansion on the coast of Cornwall, isolated enough, as he thought, to secure him from all chance of rivalry. When Rosa was completely and comfortably established with Miss Dredgely, Mr. Rubasore paid her one short and tender visit. Poor Rosa found that she liked the visit more for its shortness than its tenderness. She began to think that her lover was looking shockingly old, and to have a horror for long switchy pig-tails. She was, however, of a high principle ; and, though she already shuddered at the idea of the contract into which she had been en-

trapped, as yet she had no idea of breaking it.

Mr. Rubasore was too prudent, and had too much respect for appearances, to stay long. He repaired to his own house in Herts, and there endangered the loss of his tail. From that adventure he derived no physical ill consequences, but the moral ones were most annoying to him. The neighbourhood became a horror to him. He longed to leave it for ever, and to forget, in the caresses of his young and wonderfully beautiful bride, all remembrance of the chase of the wig. People were not surprised to find that his house and grounds were advertised to be let.

In the seclusion of the convent in which Rosa had been hitherto confined, she had hardly seen anything that could pretend to the rank or that had the bearing of a gentleman. In the luxurious indolence and privacy of this retreat, she had nourished all her romance into a feeling of perfect enthusiasm. She commanded what

books she pleased; and the wild deeds of chivalry, and the exaggerated morality, and sometimes the immorality, of the French novelists, supplied the food for the dreams of her slumbers and the thoughts of her waking hours.

Now, Captain Oliphant had seen this romantic beauty but twice before. At once he pronounced her to be the finest woman on the face of the earth; as he, who was little regardful of his feelings, felt this: it was a proof that he was in love. He met her thus singularly. The *Belladonna* was working, about a month before the period at which we are now arrived, up channel. It fell dead calm; and, the tide being against her, the frigate came to at single anchor, nearly in the same place where we are now to suppose that she is lying. Oliver Oliphant was a wag in his way. He made no pretensions to wit, or learning, or sentiment; but he liked a joke. The afternoon was beautifully fine, and merry England, in her month

of May dress, looked most bewitchingly tempting to the poor brine-encrusted midshipmen, who were well salted, both inside and out.

• So they went up in a body, and asked leave of the first-lieutenant to go ashore, merely to stretch their legs, and eat a little grass. To this the First, as in duty bound, demurred. There was some urgency that required them to get up channel, and the wind might get up also, and thus much valuable time be lost in waiting for their re-embarking, and hoisting in the boat. Now Daniel Danvers, who was a midshipman still with Captain Oliphant, although he had passed his examination more than three years, begged leave humbly to state, that “he knew, of his own knowledge, that the wind would *not* get up.”

This assurance not being quite satisfactory, they were dismissed. The Captain was standing by, and the impudence of little Danvers had amused him, so he condescendingly called all the applicants to him, and told them he had no

objection to their going on shore till sunset; with Mr. Jackson's leave, in order to play cricket on the shingles, provided that they would pull the boat themselves, and give their honours not to go higher up into the country than high-water-mark, and keep a good look-out for the recal signal.

This was much better than they expected. They pledged their honours; and the balls, bats, and stumps were handed into the quarter-boat, and all lowered down together. Their merry Captain, being desirous to know how they would manage cricket upon heavy shingle, jumped into the boat with them, and away the middies pulled laughingly to the shore.

The stumps were pitched, the look-outs appointed, and the Captain gratified by the first innings. Hard work—cricket upon shingles. The players stumbled and rolled about, cutting their shoes, tumbling down, shouting, and laughing like so many wild lads of the wood. To bowl was impossible; the bowler was there-

fore obliged to pitch home at the wicket, and very often the batter was thus enabled to send it through the air to an immense distance. When the ball was struck into the sea, they ran in after it like so many water-dogs. The exercise was most laborious.

Whilst this fun was most furious, and the Captain shouting at the full extent of his lungs, Rosa came walking that way, attended by her maid, not the Nelly whom we have just introduced to the reader. She, Rosa, was, with *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in her hand, immersed in sublime contemplation. She had already properly apostrophised the air, and the earth, and the waters, and the frail bark upon the waters, and when she had said something very touching about the heroism of those who go down in ships upon the deep sea, she came suddenly upon the heroes themselves. There they were, with nothing but a small field between her and them, bellowing and laughing like so many madcaps. The scene was very joyous, but the least romantic in the

world. Many of the goers down in ships had unshipped their coats and waistcoats, and, now and then, an expletive would break forth, that sounded strangely like an oath.

Captain Oliphant was at the wicket, his coat and waistcoat off, standing, with the bat up-raised in his hand, in the finest attitude that man could assume to display the beautiful proportions of the human frame. The head was a little thrown back, and his noble and ruddy countenance smiled in all the fulness of good-humour and high health. Rosa confessed to herself that she had never before seen anything so beautiful, and her horror increased at long yellow faces and switching pigtails. In her silent admiration, she had unconsciously dropped her *Héloise*.

Little dreaming they were watched with so much intensity by a being so lovely, the sport went on. The ball is pitched home at the wicket; but before it can strike the stumps, it is caught by the centre of the bat——ah! there it flies!

high, high up in the air, and far, far at sea. It was impelled with a vigour almost Samsonian. The lads watched it with admiration through its course, and then rushing into the water after it, were soon splashing in their almost natural element.

“ Could Ruben Rubasore do that ? ” said Rosa, with a sigh.

Now, for the first time, Oliphant’s powerful, yet very melodious voice, came like the sound of a trumpet harmony upon her delighted ears.

“ My lads, it is my positive orders that those who cannot swim well shall keep out of the water.”

The benevolent order was issued too late. One of the youngers, who happened to be nearest to the ball, carried away by his ardour, had waded out too far. The ground-swell had lifted him off his legs, and he suddenly disappeared. The boat that was lying at a grapnel a little way off, with one midshipman in it, as her keeper, immediately hauled up ; but before he

could paddle to the spot, Captain Oliphant had rushed into the sea, and, making a long dive, disappeared also. There was now a shriek from the meadow, which no one regarded.

Oliphant soon rose, bearing the insensible boy in his arms. He brought him to the shore immediately.

“We must run up to the nearest house,” said the Captain, with his lifeless burthen.

“To mine, to mine!” said Rosa Belinont, coming hastily forward.

“Jump into the cutter, and fetch the surgeon immediately.”

Things are managed admirably in a man-of-war. The last order was unnecessary. The signalman on board had been on the look-out, the accident was reported, the gig with the surgeon and the necessary restoratives, was immediately lowered down, and the boat foaming through the water towards the shore.

The Captain, still carrying the inanimate youngster in his arms, ran at a speed towards

Miss Belmont's mansion, that soon left most of the party behind, among whom was Rosa herself. She was lost in admiration at all she saw. Such devotion, such activity,—here there was actually passing before her eyes more romance,—a romance that she liked much better than all that Rousseau had ever offered her.

So good was the speed made by the surgeon, that he entered the house with Miss Belmont and her servant. The young gentleman was soon recovered. Refreshments were scattered about profusely ; and, after a great waste of the highest flown compliments, the naval party took their leave to go on board, as most of them were all this time wet to the skin.

Miss Dredgely was all activity and complaisance, and was very nearly committing the impropriety of asking the whole party to remain and dine with her and her protégée, a solecism in decorum that her protégée would have very readily pardoned, Mr. Rubasore never.

Captain Oliphant lingered to the last. How

unnecessarily long he retained that most delicate and whitest of hands !

“ O Captain Oliphant, shall I never know whether you have taken cold, in performing the most heroic of actions ?”

“ I’ll come and tell you myself.”

That same night, by the merest accident in the world, Rosa and the gallant captain were walking, by moonlight, on the beach. Mrs. Dredgely knew nothing of this.

When there is a great deal of impudence on one side, and a great deal of romance on the other, it is wonderful how a love affair prospers. This is all the fruit, Mr. Rubasore, of the tree which yourself had planted.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Love rules the court, the FLEET, the grove,
Rules men below, and saints above,
For^{*} love is heav’n, and heav’n is love.”

WE must still leave Captain Oliphant and Peter in the lane,—the one conversing with Farmer Drag, and the other ruminating upon how many possible puns there are in a calf’s head, and put the reader still a little more *au fait* as to the state of affairs at Jaspar Hall. Mrs. Dredgely wrote a flaming account of Captain Oliphant’s adventures to Mr. Rubasore, for which she got unlimitedly scolded, and received positive orders to admit no one upon

the premises until he should make his appearance. This, as the middle-aged gentleman desired, was communicated as a respectful wish to Miss Belmont, which had the effect of increasing her dislike to switch pigtails. About a fortnight after the first, Captain Oliphant contrived to have another short meeting with Rosa, which meeting by some means came to the knowledge of Mrs. Dredgely. A third is about to take place immediately. We will now return to the captain and Farmer Drag.

The Captain had been pumping the farmer, more particularly as to the point, if any other gentleman besides himself was ever known to be attentive to Miss Belmont,—Miss Belmont and her maid attentively listening all the while. It was in these words that the sprightly sailor terminated his question.

“Now, farmer, just give us some notion whether the coast is quite clear at the Hall. Has no enemy *hove in sight*—no *long shore lubber*?”

This was too much for Peter. "Hem! hem! hem!" he bawled out.

"Hem, hem, hem!" resounded from the foot-path on the other side of the hedge.

Captain Oliphant got pettish upon the subject. "D—n your hemming!"

But Peter was nothing daunted. "Ah, sir," said he, "I see, after all, you cannot bear to have your conversation *hemmed* into any tolerable limits of propriety."

This ^{*}speech was rather a dangerous one. His master burst out anew. "The devil take the rascal," he exclaimed; "the scoundrel will, at last, pun me out of all patience, and himself out of a good place."

This speech had a very damp effect upon the murderer of words. He touched his hat respectfully, and fell back, muttering to himself, "If master means that for wit, it is bad—if for fact, worse."

The captain then continued his discourse with Drag, from whom he learned that a report

had got about that Mr. Rubasore was really getting too sweet upon his ward, and that Mrs. Dredgely was nothing better than a spy, that he had placed in the house to watch all her actions.

“Great guns and small arms! what sits the wind in that quarter, my deep-sea-lead—”

“Hem, hem, hem!” said Peter in a very moderate voice.

“Hem, hem, hem!” said Rosa and her maid, amidst immoderate laughter.

“Here we are, Captain Oliphant,” continued Rosa, “you know the old song about the man who was wonderous wise, and scratched out his eyes by jumping through a quick-set hedge?”

“My heart, my life!—my compass, my—this hedge is most particularly thorny—my dearest Rosa—”

“Hem!” said Peter, “there’s *vox et pretty nell*, after all.”

“I will finish the rhyme to your comfort, captain.”

“ And when he saw his eyes were out, with all his
might and main,
He jump’d back through the quickset hedge, and
scratch’d them in again.”

The Captain got through the hedge, however,
with the loss only of his hat and his heart.

“ You Peter,” said the Captain, “ hand my
hat over here, and break through yourself.”

“ Indeed I can’t, sir ; the reasons against it
are too pointed.”

“ Go round, Nelly, to the stile, and bring
the young man with you after the Captain.”

Locked arm-in-arm, Rosa and Oliphant
walked up towards the Hall, keeping, however,
the footpath under the hedge-row elms.

“ Here, young man,” said Nelly, making
her appearance in turn ; “ come round by the
stile.”

“ Ah, splendid woman, but rustical !” ejacu-
lated Peter. “ I’m sure you must be pretty
Nell, though *vox* is not absent when you are
present.”

“ Yes, my name do happen to be Nelly ; and as to pretty, thank’ye, sir,” said the girl, curtsyng.

“ Hast got a sweetheart, Nell̄y ?” continued Peter, patronisingly.

“ Thank ye, sir. Yes ; it’s no secret, all the country know it.”

“ You are blessed in the extent of your confidants. What may be the happy youth’s name ?”

“ O, they call him, sir, about these parts, Poaching Jack. All malice, you know.”

“ Nell, pretty Nell, as you love a poacher, you can have no objection to my poaching a little on Jack’s manor ?”

“ What do you mean, Mr. Saucychaps ?” said the lady, bridling up.

“ Only a specimen of my manner,” and with this he made overt demonstration of snatching a kiss, which demonstration was met on Nelly’s part, by a severe Cornish slap on the face, that made Peter’s eyes see double. He looked a

little grim at first, at this specimen of Nelly's manners; but he rubbed his cheeks, and clapped a salve to them in the shape of another pun, and all was well again.

"A smart thing well applied, Nelly;" and then regarding her in mock heroics, he struck his heart with his right hand, and exclaimed, "The *Knell* of all my hopes."

"I'd have you to know that I'm meat for your master," cried the indignant Nelly; "follow your ugly nose up the footpath, and leave an honest girl alone."

"Meat for my master! cat's-meat!—what a paw!"

So the two marched up also, towards the house, in what is called, in military tactics, open order.

For some most urgent reasons, the Captain and Miss Belmont walked round and round the shrubberies, without ever coming into actual sight of the house. Their conversation was a peculiar one. Hitherto, Oliphant had found

the young lady rather grave in her deportment, exalted, or rather stilted in her sentiments, and magniloquent in her sentences. This, their third meeting, she had characterised by playfully mocking him, and commencing her address to him in a nursery rhyme. He adverted to this change in her manner, and told her how much mirth became her. At this she blushed deeply, and her merry humour vanished in a moment. The young officer was heartily sorry for this: he knew not what to say. As yet, he much better understood the training of his guns, than how to lead a falsely-educated, and over-refined young lady to discourse of those things that were lying heavily upon her heart, for the Captain, notwithstanding his little knowledge of the fair, had already discovered that some secret was oppressing Rosa.

Captain Oliphant knew that, as regards the usages of the world, Miss Belmont was acting with great impropriety. The poor deceived young lady knew it not. There was something

exquisitely romantic in the whole adventure, and that satisfied her conscience that nothing in it could attach blame to her conduct. She had formed, or rather Mr. Rubasore had, for his own selfish purposes, assisted her to form, her code of right and wrong, and her conscience pained her not at granting almost private interviews, to a remarkably handsome young officer, almost a stranger.

But when this young officer strove to worm from her the secret of her infamous engagement with Rubasore, which it would have been a merit in her to have revealed, she shrank from the request with a startled sense that even to hear of it was a crime.

When the poor girl talked to Captain Oliphant of the cerulean blue, of the canopied heavens, of the exquisite satisfaction of a self-immolating happiness, whose tortures were raptures, and of the unfathomable depth of the susceptibility of inexpressible and not-to-be-revealed feeling, he rather thought, upon the

whole, that he understood her; but when he proposed to her to walk up to her own house, and she frankly declined, saying, "she liked better the harbour in which they were sitting, and that she much suspected that Mrs. Dredgely was her insidious enemy, warmed like the viper in the bosom of trusting innocence," he was utterly confounded.

Ignorant sea captain that he was, he knew not that clandestine meetings, and recklessly rushing into temptations, were quite *en règle* to the disciples of romance, though to reveal a villainously imposed secret would be looked upon with horror.

"But why, beautiful Rosa, do you think that this lady is your enemy?"

"I believe she has a secret correspondence with Mr. Rubasore."

"Rubasore, Rubasore—who is Mr. Rubasore?"

"My guardian;" and then with an extremely

honest sigh, (all sighs are not honest,) she continued. "And may be—"

"Be what?"

"Ah, the fatal secret!—like a devouring vulture, confined within this heart, that it is lacerating, had like to have escaped."

"Then let the secret fly at once, and be well rid of it."

"Never, never!" said she, crossing her beautiful hands upon her heaving bosom, and turning the full, the insupportable lustre of her black eyes upon the poor Captain, the effects of which look he afterwards described as if he had been shot through with musket-balls all over his body. "This harpy of the heart, this fiery-fanged secret, shall tear its prison to pieces and die with it."

The metaphor was certainly not so good as the language was strong. The unsophisticated seaman could not understand it; but, to use a vulgar expression, his own honest heart was

rising into his mouth, when he saw those bewitching eyes fast filling with glistening and uncontrollable tears, as she exclaimed, "Alas ! my happiness is gone for ever ; I wish I may soon die." And then the young lady burst out into a most romantic gush of girlish crying. It was by no means a lady-like, hysterical access of anguish, but a good, hearty, honest fit of sobbing.

Who can see a woman thus weep and not feel inclined to put one's arm round her waist, and pillow the drooping head upon one's shoulder ? The young captain obeyed, unconsciously, this natural impulse.

"Why, Rosa?—*my* Rosa !"

"Never !"—and the fountains at the eyes gushed afresh.

"Yes, my Rosa, I will know this terrible, this distressing secret."

"Never, never, never !" with increased sobbing.

"Your guardian is concerned in it."

“ He is !”

“ He is—your lover ?”

“ He—he—he--is,” sobbing almost convulsively.

“ He’s a villain—”

“ He—he—is.”

“ And you hate him ?”

“ Pro—found—ound—downdly,” sobbed out the youthful beauty.

“ Now then, my Rosa, let me kiss away those diamonds from your eyes—for I long to see them again. Now this Rubasore—I know the rascal—taking advantage of your inexperience and extreme youth, has inveigled you into some engagement, and sworn you to secrecy. You are to marry him when you come of age. That is the secret, my bright-eyed angel ?”

“ That—is—the—se—cret !—I will never—disclose it,” muttered the lady at intervals, for the sobbing had not yet quite subsided.

It must be confessed that Captain Oliphant, though not a highly educated man, had a talent

for extracting secrets, that, “were like vultures eating away the hearts in which they were imprisoned;” but he did not know it, or he would, perhaps, have plumed himself upon it.

“Of course, Rosa,” he said, “you don’t mean to keep this damnable engagement?”

This apropos question rather increased the sobbing, and produced that sweetest of all inanities from a beautiful mouth, “I don’t know.”

“But I do—and remarkably well too. You must pitch the old monkey to the devil.”

O fie! Captain Oliphant, thus to address so superfinely a refined young lady. It was certainly wrong in morality, but right as to the effect, for it produced the first faint dawn of a smile upon the young lady’s countenance.

“O Rosa!” said the Captain, tenderly, “you are laughing at me and my uncouth manners. Now, dear Rosa—for dear you ever will be to me—hear me. I shall speak plainly to you;

so far befriend me, as plainly to understand me. Before I know more of you—before I hear one word of your property or your expectations—I offer you the hand of a frank sailor at once.”

“O Captain Oliphant! this is so pre—cip—ip—pipitate.” The sobbing had recommenced.

“Not a bit of it, Rosa. When the wind sits fair, ship the capstan-bars at once.”

“Hem! hem!! hem!!!” very audibly pronounced by some one unseen, had the effect of suddenly startling the two lovers into a less reclining position, stifling the sobs of the lady by something very like a giggle, and wonderfully exciting the bile of the gallant Captain.

“I’ll break every bone in the punning rascal’s skin. Was there ever such an interruption at such a moment?”

“Why,” said Rosa, between laughing and crying, “since, by the wonderful sympathy that exists between congenial minds—a sympathy, of which every link* has been cast from all eternity in the ethereal furnace, in which are

amalgamated together our best affections, our dearest aspirations, our mortal and our immortal hopes—”

“ My dear Rosa ! I can’t understand a word of all this.”

“ O !—my dear Captain—it is a sort of a shipping of caps and bars,” said the young lady, archly enough ; “ but you have not yet learned properly to express the most delicate shades of a trembling emotion, and to shape the dreamy suggestions of the heart into words that breathe of the soul. Let us *now* walk up to the house.”

“ With all my heart and soul. I like plain sailing. Rosa, I have declared myself your lover ; and, when an *honest* man has made that declaration to the girl of his choice, he is never happy until he has made that declaration known to all the world. Rosa, do you accept me as such ?”

“ My engagement to my guardian—”

“ Was a fraud and a villainy, neither good

in law nor in common honesty. Away with it."

"Would La Nouvelle Héloïse have broken it?"

"What new ship's that just launched?—Break it by all means."

"If I keep it, I shall break my heart; and if I break it, I shall lose all the glory of self-immolation by dying at the foot of the altar of principle."

"I must say, my beloved Rosa, that you beat the parson of the fleet at launching high-sounding words. I can see no glory in dying, except one dies for one's country; and no glory, but a d—d deal of disgrace, in helping a swindler and a rascal to secure the advantages of his rascally swindling."

"You put this in a fearfully vivid light, Captain Oliphant; but proceed."

"Spoken like a sensible girl. Now I offer you my hand again. I will just tell you my good and my bad. I have a clear independent

income of one thousand per annum, which may be trebled at the death of my mother, whom, may God spare for many and many a year! My family is well connected on the female side, and—what I look upon as my greatest boast—I am, what in my heart I think would make me a match for a duchess, a post-captain in his Majesty's royal navy."

"Of all the declarations that I ever read of, in all my books," thought Miss Belmont, "this is the most singular. When will the man go upon his knees? I'll move on to that grass-plot, there is not a soul near, and the turf is beautifully smooth." She only thought, but spoke not, and bowed.

"Now, my dear Rosa, I have said the best I can for myself, it is but fair you should hear the worst. I would scorn to sail under false colours."

"What is coming next?" said the lady to herself. She bowed again, and, having gained the middle of the grass-plot, stood still.

“In the first place, my education, being wholly maritime, has been, what would be generally called, greatly neglected. In the next place, I am only the son of a grocer, and, mayhap, you may not like my christian name: it is nothing more than Oliver; and those who *love* me call me Noll for shortness. Rosa Belmont, will you call me Noll?”

“Noll!” said she, laughing,—not, of course, meaning it as a token of acceptance.

“Thank you, from the bottom of an honest sailor’s heart,” said he, snatching her to him, and giving her a hearty kiss. “Rosa, my own—my beloved!”

Though they stood upon the very centre of the grass-plat, Rosa, by some strange fatality, quite forgot the ceremony of kneeling: for, placing her hand affectionately in his, she said, “Now let us go up to the house, and tell Mrs. Dredgely.”

“And did my Rosa ever love that long-tailed baboon?”

“Yes, Oliver—Noll, I mean—I once thought so.”

“Just the straightforward answer that I expected,” said he, drawing her fondly to him

Thus was Rosa wooed and won!

Rash old man that I am to describe the how! What novelist now dares detail at length a love-scene? Do we not always find the author backing out of the difficulty thus—“What they said, though highly interesting to themselves, would not be,” &c. But I, with the imbecility of senility, have detailed all that they said, merely because it was interesting to the parties concerned, foolishly deeming that, if it were interesting to them, it might, for that very reason, be interesting also to others. How prolix I am! Lector, pardon, and read on.

CHAPTER IX.

“A man who would commit a pun would pick a pocket.”

SMELLFUNGUS.

“Those only hate a pun, who are too dull to make, or too stupid to understand, one.”

MUNDUNGUS.

THE surmise of Miss Belmont was perfectly correct. Mrs. Dredgely had written to Rubasore all that she knew about her meetings with the young Captain, and a great deal more; not that she wished to indulge in slander, but to keep up her reputation as a fluent letter-writer. How else could she have filled her three pages?

Mr. Rubasore, when he received these unpleasant tidings, was fostering the end of his

pigtail, and endeavouring, by all means, to recover his lost inches. A more important care now occupied his capacious mind. He ordered post-horses, and travelled, with all reasonable rapidity, to the little inn at the little fishing village, near Jaspar Hall. He did not like to present himself before his future wife until he had called in all the assistance art could afford to cover the ravages that forty-eight years will make upon a spare habit of body. As he was occupied over his tedious toilet, he observed the frigate's barge, and the boat's crew standing near her on the shingly beach. He cut himself with his razor. When he was fully dressed, and trying to look his youngest, whilst his ward and the Captain were astonishing Mrs. Dredgely by their communication at the hall, Mr. Rubasore walked down to the sea-side to see how the land lay. Inauspicious journey!

There were two hands in the barge keeping her afloat. The rest of the crew and the coxswain were loitering about the beach, picking

up stones and shying them into the water, and busy with other occupations that so plainly indicate the weariness of idleness. We may be occupied and idle too at once, Mr. Critic. Witness the time that you were employed in endeavouring to castigate this true history. Let us, for the want of some better employment, listen to the conversation of the seamen.

“I say, Bill, d’ye think as how the Cap’an will drop down yet awhile?”

“No, Bob, he won’t heave in sight these three glasses.”

The trowsers were hitched up, the quid turned, and there was again silence.

“Cox’un, my hearty,” said a broad, thirsty-faced fellow, “d’ye think there’s a grog-shop within hail?”

“No, there’s none a-nigher than those tumbledown cribs they call a village. Besides, the Captain said we were not to leave the boat.”

“Well, good luck to him!” replied he of the broad thirsty-face. “Cox’un, let me run up

to those houses and spell for a can of grog, just to drink his health, and show him how we respects his orders."

"Now," said the coxswain, looking Portland stone—"now I'll tell ye my mind kindly, messmates. If any man starts from this boat, I'll just knock him down on the shingle, so fling me out one of the stretchers. Our skipper never sends a marine in the barge with a fixed bayonet to keep us from desarting, not even a petty officer with his dirk, so I stands upon honour. I likes honour, and I detests compulsion; I can't abide it. So devil a ~~man~~ shall start, say I, or I'll knock him over."

"But what shall we do?" said another.

"Cox'un shall be agreeable, and sing us a song."

"That will I, my fire-eaters." Then, placing the stretcher between his legs in the manner that little boys ride a-cock-horse upon their grandpapas' canes, he began most dolefully to dole out the following ditty. How he could do

it so mournfully in the blessed sunshine, Jack only could account for:

“Why, then, one day, all as I was a-going
Rolling all along the meadows so gay,
I chanc-ed for to meet a fair young lady,
And thus unto me she began for to say.”

“’Vast, there, ’vast!” sang out another broad-shouldered fellow. “I say, ’vast, man, the downhawl upon that snivelling tune. There’s no gumption in it; sounds like the bagpipes with the belly-ache.”

“Well, if so be, shipmate, as how you doesn’t like my song, why whistle.....”

What more this most worthy of coxswains would have said, we must leave to the very wise to conjecture; for, at this moment, Mr. Rubasore turned the corner of the stone-raised boundary that divided the beach from the meadow, and stood confessed before the barge’s crew, certainly the admiration of all eyes. Seeing eleven huge fellows on the shingle, and two more close at hand in the barge, every

man of them having lots of wicked fun upon his hard-featured visage, Mr. Rubasore, notwithstanding his wish to acquire news, hesitated to advance. No better quizzer, or more cruel, existed than Mr. Rubasore himself; but he was masterly in the art, only in a cool, quiet manner, and must have gentlemanly subjects to work upon. He despised, whilst he much feared, the men before him.

“Cox’un,” said one of the crew, “what a spindleshanked land lubber! My eyes! he waddles like a duck crossing the main gratings.”

But Mr. Rubasore had a generous advocate. “Now, Bill,” said one Oakley, rolling about like a Dutch schuyt on the Doggerbank, as he tramped to and fro on the shingles, “don’t be disparaging, man. He can’t walk like we—for why—it’s his misfortune, man; how can you ’xpect him to walk properly when he was never at sea? Poor wretch! I pities him.”

Oakley said this loudly, on purpose that

Mr. Rubasore might hear him, and actually expected from the gentleman he had so chivalrously advocated, if not a shilling, at least thanks. The gentleman was deficient in gratitude: he advanced.

"True enough, Oakley," said another; "but see, he's picking his way here, like a hen in silk stockings walking through a pigsty."

"Come, come," said the coxswain; "d'ye see, my boys, it's our skipper's orders, that we should always be civil to the thingumbobs that we may pick up along shore."

"Well, well; but he does look like a poor ignorant land-fish, sartain-ly."

"There it is again," said the coxswain, patronisingly. "So, if so be that he should make a fool of himself in his speechification, you grinning dog, have a care you don't laugh; for how could he have got any eddication?"

"Couldn't—seeing as how he never crossed the line."

Mr. Rubasore heard these comments upon

himself, comments so full of honest commiseration, with none of that thankfulness of feeling which they deserved. Throwing himself into his most magnificent attitude, he went down to them boldly, and, standing among them, took snuff with great dignity. Most of the seamen touched their hats; but the grimaces they made to each other but little corresponded with this token of respect. Mr. Rubasore wished to be gracious, but he made a terrible mistake at the very commencement of his address.

“Common sailor,” said he, turning to the burly coxswain, “pray to whom does this shallop belong?”

This was almost too much for the coxswain, the more especially as the rest of the boat’s crew began to laugh more than ever.

“Don’t grin, ye dogs, but touch your hats to him. Here, Oakley, take away this stretcher, or I shall sartainly be knocking the gentleman down with it.”

Having relieved himself of this temptation,

turning to Mr. Rubasore, he continued : “ Common sailor, sir ! Did you say *common sailor* ? Frizzle my wig, sir, what d’ye mean ? ” Then, turning to his shipmates, “ But, poor thing, it’s all along of his ignorance. ” Then again to the astounded landsman, with an enforced respect, again touching his hat, “ Please your honour, sir, there’s no such thing as a *common sailor* in the British navy. We are all uncommon dogs, very uncommon dogs indeed ! D’ye see this boat’s crew—thirteen of us ? Well, set six-and-twenty upon us—French, Dutch, Danes, Spanish, all one to Jack—and if we give a Flemish account of them, I’ll undertake to be uncommonly well d—d ! Common sailor ! There’s a rig ! ”

A little startled by this burst of indignation, Rubasore attempted sternness, and said, “ What do you mean, man, by putting yourself in a passion before me ? ”

“ Common sailor ! Why there’s not a foremast man in the channel fleet who won’t be

made an officer of—when the right vacancy comes. Common sailor—you ricketty piece of Brummagem—common sailor !”

Oakley, much amused at the coxswain thus working himself into a rage, which rage was now more than equalled by the passion of Mr. Rubasore, must needs now, to use a phrase of his own, shove in his oar thus. “Don’t be angry, cox’un; you know it’s all sheer ignorance of him. You should treat the gentleman with respect like.” So saying, he walked up impudently to Mr. Rubasore, touched his hat to him, and then surveyed him deliberately from top to toe, rolling his quid about from the hollow of one cheek into that of the other. When he had fully satisfied himself as to the dimensions of the object of his curiosity, he swung himself round upon his heel, squirting, with great coolness, the contents of his mouth upon the clean white silk stockings before mentioned, not forgetting to touch his hat at the same time.

“I say, sailor man,” cried out the now completely badgered seeker for information, “you have soiled my stockings. I look upon it as a premeditated insult, and insist upon your begging my pardon, and wiping my leg.”

“Why, sir, I begs your pardon, seeing as how a stray shot has dropped athwart o’ your—ha! ha! ha!—I suppose I must call it a leg;” and then, turning to his nearest companion, he continued: “Eyes! It’s for all the world, Bob, like a marling-spike, sarved round with a sarvice of white silk.”

“This is insupportable,” said Rubasore. “I shall report your insolence to your superiors.” Pointing to the frigate, “I ask of you who superintends in that vessel? What business has she to anchor under my very windows, I may almost say? Furnish me with a categorical answer.”

As Mr. Rubasore might as well have asked the coxswain for the name of one of the mountains of the moon, he merely got in return, a sullen “Can’t say, sir.”

But Oakley, who loved fun, did his best to promote a quarrel, seeing that the honest coxswain was totally at a loss, like himself, for Mr. Rubasore's meaning. "Why, Tom," said he, "d'ye take that? He's a-calling you wicked names in his outlandish lingo."

This again aroused the coxswain's anger. He had been already called, common sailor, a very great insult to a man-of-war's-man, and it therefore required but little provocation to make him break out afresh, which he did in the following philippic:—

"O, by the pipers, you are at that—are you, you peaked-nose, parchment-faced, goggle-eyed villain! Why, you walking distemper—you ghost of six-upon-four—you loblolly-boy's bye-blow—"

"How dare you thus abuse a gentleman and a magistrate? Know you who I am? I am Mr. Rubasore, and, in right of my ward, the lord of this manor. Yes, you vituperating man, I am the proprietor of the very stones you

stand upon, for they are above high-water mark. Now, you man," seizing one of the boat's crew, "as I am in the commission for the peace, I take you into custody on my own view, for attempting to create a breach of the peace. I do—you, you, you calumniating mariner."

Very unluckily, he had seized the most sturdy fellow of the batch, who stood as passively and as immovable as the rock deeply imbedded in the sand. All Mr. Rubasore's attempts to shake, or even to stir him were perfectly futile. However, announcing himself as a magistrate made a considerable impression on the seamen, who have generally as much undefined awe as they have antipathy against the law.

At length, the seized sailor said, "Cox'un, shall I strike him down?"

"No; 'ware the law."

"Shake him off?"

"No; 'ware the law."

"Come along up to the Hall, you abusive

sailor. Come, I say, and I'll make out your mittimus." And Mr. Rubasore tugged and tugged; but he moved nothing but himself.

"No, Mr. Rubbishashore," said the coxswain, touching his hat. "That man's the stroke oar starboard, and mustn't, by no means, leave the boat. Must obey orders. But that's no reason, sir, why you shoudn't try to move him, if it will amuse you. Jack, don't let the gentlem'n get the law of ye. Stand quiet. He can't hurt you, poor thing!"

"But will he get the law of me if I smoke?"

"No; it's my notion as he won't."

"Then bear a hand, Frank Funnel, and lend us your pipe."

The pipe, well replenished, was immediately handed to the prisoner by the said Frank Funnel, and then the other began smoking away most furiously, and puffing out the stringent vapour in thick volumes, full into the eyes, nostrils, and mouth of the magistrate. There was no resisting this: he let go his feeble grasp

immediately, and was nearly suffocated by a tremendous fit of coughing. When he recovered his power of speech, forgetting that the Captain of the men, whoever he might be, was the person whom he had most to dread in what concerned him nearest, gave vent to his anger thus:—

“Most horrible insolence! ’Tis the rebellious spirit of the lower orders. Your captain shall avenge me, and flog every one of you within an inch of death.”

“Pooh, pooh! all slush! Captain Oliphant will never flog a real seaman for such a thread-paper case.” Mr. Rubasore was favoured with this assurance by the coxswain.

“Then he’s as great a rascal as yourself,”

This was a very improper speech from Mr. Rubasore, and not at all consistent with his usual prudence. When the coxswain heard it, he began to rub his hands with great glee, and bawled out, “Now, my boys, the law’s on our side,—he has spoken ill of the captain—take

him into custody. Mr. Rubbishandmore, you are our prisoner."

He was soon seized, and held in such a manner that all motion was denied to him. All his attempts to plunge were useless. He was fixed as in a vice.

"Ah, Mr. Rubarore," said his former prisoner to the unhappy gentleman, "it will go hard with you now. Downright mutiny, by Jove!"

Though Mr. Rubasore was motionless, yet was he not speechless. He made the beach ring again with cries for help, and for "John Tring, the constable, Thomas Prout, the headborough," and with shouts of "Murder!"

We must now leave him, for a short space, in his unpleasant predicament, and return to Captain Oliphant and Miss Belmont. They had, as they proposed doing, gone up to the Hall and plainly told Mrs. Dredgely of their engagement. The wily lady was all astonishment. She could make nothing of it—at least for her

own interest. She begged them most pathetically not to be so precipitate. Told them to wait the arrival of Mr. Rubasore, whom she expected hourly—talked much about the indelicacy of such speed, and the impropriety of clandestine meetings; and concluded an almost hysterical harangue by saying, that she washed her hands of the whole affair.

To all this, Rosa was very majestic and polysyllabic, the Captain very jocular. The lady, at length, full of a great deal of very virtuous indignation, left the lovers together, to debate with herself whether she ought to join them in defeating the person who had placed her in her present very comfortable situation.

This hour's conversation had a most wonderful effect upon the young officer. If, before, he loved Rosa Belmont for her surpassing beauty and gentleness of manners, he now adored—almost worshipped her,—when he came fully to comprehend the astonishing cultivation of her mind. Even on scientific points, con-

nected with navigation, as it regards the philosophy of astronomy, he found her infinitely his superior. She spoke the French, Italian, and English languages, each in its perfection. She could read the German, and was well versed in the Latin, the effects of her conventual education. She had also the command of several musical instruments, and her drawings were such that would have made many a drawing-master sigh with despair. She was highly accomplished; the instructions which she had received were genuine—it had been the sole business of her life to become, under the most able instructors, what she then was; in nothing was she superficial except in the *morale* of her education.

But is not that *morale* almost everything?

Assuredly. But in one with the virtuous tendencies of Rosa, her character would soon, nay, it already had begun, to cast off the false varnish of romance, and the sickliness of a morbid sensibility. Her guardian had, for years,

been endeavouring to divert her from the true path of feminine dignity, and to fill her brain with chimerical notions of love, faith, and inviolable constancy. She now began to understand the delusions he had thrown around her, and to comprehend the blackness of the villany that created them.

Poor Captain Oliphant soon learned to feel himself as boorish, even brutish, in comparison to her. He watched her words with reverence, and whenever she spoke, he made the most solemn vows that he would endeavour, by hard study, to make himself more worthy of her. Yet, with this feeling of self-humiliation, he found always his indignation the more vivid against her perfidious guardian, who had, if the expression may be permitted, mentally dishonoured her. Ardently did he burn for an opportunity of venting that indignation upon its object.

Though so fascinated with Rosa, he had not forgotten his boat's crew. He proposed that they should walk down to the spot where he

knew that his obedient men would be found, for they were much attached to him, but he little dreamt how they were then employed.

We have too long lost sight of Peter Drivel, who so soon lost sight of Nelly. The honest youth had formerly lived as man of all work with a wit, who had almost starved him ; but, before that consummation had quite taken place, the booksellers quite starved the wit, and thus saved Peter's life. He was, however, in so bad a predicament, that he was compelled to go on board the Tender, lying off the Tower stairs, his heart full of grief for his late master, and his stomach all emptiness. The king soon remedied the latter misfortune, with ample supplies of burgoo and dog's body. The former, time alleviated, assisted by the blessed idea that the mantle of inspiration that had famished his master when living, had descended upon his, Peter's, shoulders.

Peter Drivel was soon drafted into the saucy Belladonna ; but, as on board of a man-of-war,

a very little wit goes a very great way, he was found to be rather out of his element. Instead of learning the use of blocks, and shrouds, and dead-eyes, he tried to be droll upon them, by which he generally got a starting from the rope's-end, or the boatswain's cane. Captain Oliphant witnessing one of these, saved him from an approaching thrashing, and, questioning him, soon discovered that he was more fit for a domestic than a mizen-topman. He took him at once into his service, and gave him constant employment by making him an idler. He became body servant, and bone-polisher No. 2. The captain's steward is always bone-polisher No. 1, and is generally called Mister.

Now this Peter of our's, and of Captain Oliphant, went roving about the grounds, musing upon all manner of words, and taking, ever and anon, from out his coat-pocket, a well-thumbed spelling-book, by the renowned Dilworth, that terror of naughty little boys. He had already constructed three new puns, and he was deeply

ruminating how to plan three opportunities that might enable him to let them off with effect, when the small farmer Drag crossed his path. On him he fastened, and him it was that he was now ambitious to astound.

He led the productive rustic about, with one hand holding open the universal spelling-book, with the other fastened to the collar of his smock-frock, lest he should escape. How is it that professed wits have so strongly upon them the power of repulsion?

In this wise, and much discoursing, at least on the part of Peter, they came down, unconsciously, within sight and hearing of Mr. Rubasore, who, still in custody of the barge's crew, continued to shout from time to time for John Tring, the constable, Thomas Prout, the headborough, and "murder!"

"Murder! murder! Farmer Drag." Now the farmer was the tenant of Rubasore, or at least of Rubasore's ward, Miss Belmont: He

was eager to run to him, but Peter held him by the collar.

“ Now pray, farmer, do attend—the whole science of wit, as *now* practised in the best circles, and the only species *now* existing among literary men, consists in—”

“ Let I go—doan’t a zee ’squire a scuffling wie sailor-men. Bless un, how un squalls murder.”

“ Stand still—plenty of time, farmer. When a man cries out ‘murder,’ you may take his own word for it, he’s not murdered. The whole science of wit lies in this blessed little book. My master, now in heaven, taught me the inestimable secret.”

“ Drag, you rascal, — here you see your landlord being murdered,—run for the constable—murder, murder !”

Lecturers don’t like interruptions. Peter turned for a moment towards Mr. Rubasore, and shaking his fist at him, said, “ An asthma to your lungs!—can’t you be quiet? You

have explained yourself to the farmer, now let me do the same. Drag, attend. B—o, bo ! a word of terror. B—o—w, bow, to shoot with. B—e—a—u, beau, a fop ; here you see are three words, the same sound, different sense—watch ! get these columns by heart, containing all the words in the language, Drag, of similar sounds—sure to catch somebody in two minutes—that's the fashionable wit ; and thus you elevate your trophies upon the columns of the universal spelling book. Buy one, then you'll always have one by you—twig ?—not good, though. But, farmer, your eyes goggle so, that I'm afraid you are but a numskull, after all."

" Whoy, hast almost throatled I, let un go my collar, do ye?"

" Certainly—why didn't you say you were choking before—crammed him like a Norfolk turkey;" and then turning to Mr. Rubasorè, whom this incomparable pair had now approached, " Now, sir, I have explained myself—go on—what can we do for you ?"

It was some moments before Mr. Rubasore could speak from exasperation; at length, he spluttered forth, "Farmer Drag, bear you witness to this forcible detention of me, a magistrate; you witnessed the assault—you now witness the imprisonment. When you saw my life endangered, and heard my calls of 'murder,' why, sirrah, did you stand loitering there with that booby with a book?"

"Whoy, 'squire,—and my sarvice to ye—I believes as how it were, that whoile thou was talking about one sort of murder, this chap was talking of another—and learning I how to murder words."

"Well said, farmer, you improve vastly; and all, sir, owing to the booby with the book. Gridirons! farmer, but there may be boobies without books!"

How much smarter Peter would have become on this occasion it is impossible to say, for Mr. Rubasore was too choleric to remain quietly a butt for the student in the universal spelling-

book. Every one commenced talking at once—with the exception of those who were swearing, and those who were laughing. The confusion was horrible; and, when it had just become most interestingly violent, arm-in-arm, Captain Oliphant and Miss Belmont made the turn of the low stone-wall, and thus found themselves, at once, in the midst of the scene of contention.

This unexpected arrival did but, for some time, increase the confusion. Rosa, a good deal embarrassed, at length said, between a laugh and a tremble, turning to her lover, "Permit me to introduce to you my guardian for a few short months to come—Mr. Rubasore."

"I had some slight knowledge of the gentleman before. My men, take your hands off. Mr. Rubasore, I perceive."

"You have the advantage of me, sir. If, as by your uniform I conceive, you are the commanding officer of these men, I have to complain of one of the greatest outrages that was ever perpetrated upon the liberty of the sub-

ject, and the person of a magistrate; but I shall not leave these offenders to your sense of justice, sir,—which would probably turn out to be no justice to me. But, Miss Belmont, had you not better retire to the Hall?—you ought not to witness insults like these put upon your guardian. Your own sense of delicacy, Rosa, must urge you to retire.”

“Do so, my love, but go not far away. Peter shall wait upon you.”

Miss Belmont, and Peter following, moved about a hundred yards from the spot, and remained, though not hearers, spectators of what was transacting.

“My love!” repeated Mr. Rubasore, with great indignation, “I see that there is much to be rectified here—I have been sadly wanting in my duty as this young lady’s guardian.”

“You have, sir.”

“These interruptions will not forward a mutual understanding, sir. As yet, I do not remember you—will you favour me with your name?”

“ I am only too eager that you should know it. I am Captain Oliver Oliphant, of his Majesty’s frigate, Belladonna, and nephew to your neighbour of Trestletree Hall, Sir Octavius Bacuissart.”

“ O, you are the grocer’s son.” And this was said with an emphatic sneer, and pointedly towards the boat’s crew.

“ Exactly, sir ; the grocer’s son. Now, sir, what have you to say to me ?”

“ That, as a magistrate, I enjoin you to aid me in detaining these men, until I get the assistance of the constable and the headborough of the hamlet to lock them up for the night in the cage, for various breaches of the peace, a riot, and assault upon my person ; this I will do upon my own view, legally. As his Majesty’s officer, you are bound to assist the civil power. I shall make out the necessary mittimuses to-morrow, and send them to the county gaol for trial.”

“ What next ?”

Well might the Captain ask it. His men were so mute with astonishment, that they even forgot to turn their quids. They were all, however, over-anxious to speak.

“ Thus much, sir, as a magistrate, as the representative of his Majesty, and a conservator of the King’s peace. Now, listen to me, Captain Oliphant, in the character of a gentleman.”

“ Let us see how you assume that.”

“ Sir, it is no assumption. I derived it from my father. Can you say so much ?”

“ More, infinitely more. I derived it from my king, and have never forfeited it by my conduct. Can *you* say as much ?”

“ As a gentleman, sir, I tell you that you are dishonoured, in deserting your duty, a duty for which the nation pays you but too well, in order to be loitering on shore on purpose to carry on a clandestine correspondence with a young, secluded, and inexperienced girl.”

This, it must be confessed, was a terrible

thrust. That Rubasore had an arrowy tongue. The gallant Captain, for a moment, felt rather uncomfortable.

“ The setting up of the lower rigging,”—he began, but instantly stopped, feeling the full force of the ridicule of attempting a nautical defence for his appearance on that particular part of the coast.

“ I know not what you mean by the apology which you were going to offer ; and of which you are evidently ashamed.”

“ I am ashamed of nothing, sir,—and was going to offer you no apology.”

“ It matters not—but there lies yon vessel in perfect idleness—I cannot see a man stirring about her—”

“ He would be punished if you could.”

“ And thus the service of your country is neglected, in order that innocence may be seduced.”

“ Have you done ?” Something else the

Captain then muttered between his teeth, which was unintelligible.

“ I have addressed you as a magistrate and as a gentleman. It is now my office to address you as the guardian of Miss Belmont. I warn you off these premises. If you are seen here again, I will get an injunction from the Lord Chancellor, and throw you, if you approach here again, into the Fleet Prison, for contempt of court. I have done. Now, Drag, go up to the village for Tring and Prout, and then we'll convey these malefactors to prison.”

Captain Oliphant had, hitherto, borne himself with a tolerable degree of self-possession. He had, as yet, prevented the ebullition of his rage, and was just about replying to him, *seriatim*, when the coxswain stepped up to him, and twisting his hat, said, “ Please sir, when you were away, this person said you were a rascal, and we only civilly took him into custody.”

This was the one drop of irritation too much. The bitter philippic that he had prepared for his opponent was forgotten! for, clenching his fists, he advanced close upon him, and said, with a voice of thunder, "Did you, sir, dare to call me rascal?"

"I dare do anything a gentleman dare; and what I dare do, I dare avow. However, I did not say that you actually were a rascal. I said, sir, that if you did not flog these men for their contempt of me, you were a rascal. I repeat it."

"I will not flog these men, nor any of them, for their contempt of you."

"I will not be bullied, sir. I thank God that I am not one of your crew."

"And so do I. I will not flog the men. Recal the words, or take the alternative."

"Fight you, I suppose," said Mr. Rubasore, with the most insulting sneer; "give you an opportunity of exercising a profession that you

have been brought up to. What, sir ! do you think that I will play the fool, because you are disposed to play the bravo? Keep your courage for the enemies of your country. Perhaps, when it comes to the trial, you may find that you have not any to spare."

" Insolent worm ! You compel me to kick you."

" Stand back. You dare not, Captain Oliphant. What, surrounded by your own crew, and under the very guns of your own ship, assault an unarmed, elderly gentleman, like myself ! Do it, sir—and who would be the coward then ?"

At this, the murmuring of the seamen grew into a perfect clamour ; and, almost with tears in their eyes, they begged leave to duck him of the cankerous tongue.

The noise of this renewed riot reached the spot to which Rosa and Peter had retired. They were, however, too far away to distinguish the words. Peter Drivel had been painfully

silent too long; so, stepping forward, and taking off his hat to the young lady, he humbly begged leave to make a remark. The permission was graciously given.

“Why then, ma’am, by the row they are making down there, would it not be natural to suppose that the captain, crew, and ship had just arrived from the Straits of *Babelmandel*?”

“I see, by the freedom of your remarks upon your master, you do not know what *straits* are. What can be the meaning of this long wordy contention?”

As this reproof was given in a good-natured tone, Peter felt it to be no reproof at all; but, giving vent to a fresh impertinence, continued, “As, ma’am, I am never *straitened* for an answer——”

“Stop, sir; let me undeceive you. I have no time to listen to your wit; I am too much alarmed at what is going forward about the boat. Let us approach.”

They did so, and found that the gallant cap-

tain had calmed himself down to a state that enabled him to make a set speech.

“ I was wrong to feel angry,” said he, “ at an object so far beneath the notice of an honest man. In justice to myself, I will, however, answer you in the three capacities that you have assumed—as a magistrate, a gentleman, and a guardian. I have not, like yourself, the gift of the gab—the powers of language, I should have said—to spin a yarn—that is, to plead a case like a lawyer. As a magistrate, I tell you, that, by virtue of my commission, I am a magistrate; and, therefore, will not concur in your arbitrary proceedings. They would, even if they were just in themselves, be so great an impediment to his Majesty’s service, that you could not persist in them. It appears that it was yourself who was guilty of the first assault. You may indict them, and me, and all my ship’s company, if you like, at the quarter-sessions, and thus cover yourself with eternal ridicule. So vast heaving, and clap down the

paul there.”—We omit the hems of the attentive Peter.—“As a gentleman, I shall only say, that if you insult, you should be prepared to take the consequences. But, as a guardian, stand forth, man of the false heart and designing villany, and know yourself. Would an upright guardian work upon the imagination of his ward, whilst yet a child; talk to her of a passion she was all too young to comprehend; and inveigle her into an engagement, before she could know properly the meaning of the words in which it was embodied. Would an upright guardian send his ward away to the solitude and isolation of foreign convents; places where there was no moral instruction, and where the religious dogmas were alien to her family and her country? Would an upright guardian surround his ward with the poisonous trash of French romances? Would——”

But, by this time, the gentleman, for whose benefit all this eloquence was produced, had ungratefully taken himself too far off to hear

it. He saw, at once, that the game he had, for so many years, been playing, was lost to him in a few days. He repaired to his lonely inn, resumed his travelling dress, and went and burrowed himself in some obscure locality in London, in order to implore—to plot; and, if both proved unsuccessful, to revenge.

Everything was now sunshine. The barge's crew cheered, as Mr. Rubasore made sail. Peter hemmed and punned by turns; and the Captain and Miss Belmont walked up to Jaspar Hall, to a dinner that Mrs. Dredgely was compelled to provide for them, and over which she was compelled also to preside, and play propriety. The boat's crew, having money given them, went up to the alehouse from which Mr. Rubasore had just departed, to take a hearty meal of beans and bacon, and whiskey grog, which latter they were to enjoy upon honour, that is, really enjoy and not abuse. Peter was one of this jovial party!

CHAPTER X.

" A very good song, and very well sung,

Jolly companions every one.

We are the boys,

For mirth and noise,

We are the boys, that tipple the can,

Jolly companions every one.'

OLD SEA-CHAUNT.

How they got on with the setting up of the lower rigging, on board the saucy Belladonna, it is not necessary to state ; and, if stated, would not be found very satisfactory. On shore, everything went on as happily as could be desired.

For once, we will dispense with etiquette, and attend to the barge's crew, rather than the Captain's party. They are but humble heroes, certainly, but honest and most worthy ones. May England never see the noble race extinct!

Hearing that the seamen were assembled at the Plough, in the little fishing hamlet, all the idle fellows about the neighbourhood found it convenient to drop in; not, certainly, to drink, for it was found that but few of them had any money. Now your really idle dog is generally a hard-working fellow at every thing that is utterly profitless, and a merry companion to boot. The Diomedé dinner was scarcely eaten, than the one room of the alehouse was completely filled. At the top of a long open table, sat Peter: at the bottom, the coxswain. There was plenty of whiskey on the table, and no scarcity of pipes and tobacco; and everything promised well for a carouse.

The benches round the table were just sufficient to accommodate the seamen; but, when the village schoolmaster dropped in, Peter edged a little, and made room for him. Then came the blacksmith, and he found the like favour near the coxswain. The barber wriggled in his little and snake-like body without

ceremony. Then a louting, lounging fellow—Nelly's sweetheart as he afterwards proved to be, and a most desperate poacher—got a place in the centre. An old soldier, with a license to beg, was next welcomed, with a cheer. In fact, not only, as Macbeth exclaimed, was “the table full,” but the room also.

Before the mirth had yet settled into its full summer shower, Peter Drivel and the village pedagogue got into some very learned conversation. This schoolmaster, who was named Rickets, had not much learning, but more than sufficient for the sphere in which he found himself placed. He was always ready to pour this excess upon any one who would be kind enough to receive it—the very line of conduct that Peter was pleased to follow with his puns. “For,” as he would feelingly observe, “of what use is it popping off your bullets of the brain without a target?”

Already had he discharged several of them, point blank, into the schoolmaster. He swal-

lowed them—for he was drinking Peter's grog ; but they went down like bolusses, a little too large, and a great deal too bitter. At length, one fairly stuck by the way : he made a horribly wry face at it, and, when Peter asked him as usual, " Do you take ? " he begged submissively to be excused.

" It may be good, master, but there's nothing certain in it. Get into duodecimals, I say ; there you'll discover wonders, master Peter—what's your other name ? "

" Drivel. "

" I have no objection. No offence, I hope, Master Drivel. I have seen the world ; and I don't think that there's any man in the county that can say that he has worn out more rods. Duodecimals for me. "

" So you don't like wit ? "

" Yes, when I can get it. No offence ; but really, master Peter, as I have seen the world and worn out rods, I may be allowed to know something about wit and duodecimals. Now,

master Peter, I think you want several essentials to make you a wit."

"You alarm me, my friend, learned in the duodecimals, you quite frighten me. What can they possibly be?"

"In the first place, you have too much presumption."

"O friend Duo! but you know that wit was never modest."

"Nor impudence—with no offence. I have seen the world, and flogged little boys. But, good sir—mark, I say not that yours is the presumption of wit—it is only the presumption of a false calculation, which would never happen if you worked by duodecimals; for know, that no man can afford to be witty under a thousand a-year, sir. I have flogged boys, and 'cute ones, too, and know it. I think a man of five hundred a-year may pretend to be humorous, but then he must spend too much of his income in giving dinners. From five hundred downwards, a man may be accounted droll, provided

that he holds no dependent situation, and shows off before the proper persons. Every other attempt at wit may be legally called buffoonery by any one richer than the wit himself. I made the calculation myself."

Peter looked hard at the little shabby pedagogue. "Why, you're a rum old chap; you make me all of a tremble. And pray who is the wittiest person hereabouts?"

"Why, why, Mr. Rubasore—no question of it. And if he marries his ward, as some folks say he will, he'll be so all his life. Why, man, all this place about here belongs to the Jaspar Hall estate."

"So, when he called me, a little while ago, the 'booby with the book,' and which I mistook for a childish expression, that was wit?"

"Can you doubt it? If it had been said in a large company, it would have set the table in a roar. I have a great mind to laugh at it myself, only my palate is rather dry."

“Well, wet it, old A B C. You have some notions—you, with your duodecimals.”

“I have seen the world. I have flogged boys—”

“Never mind all that—you have flogged me. You have plucked the best feather out of my cap. I used to think that wit procured riches, and I now find that it is riches that must procure wit.”

“Exactly. A poor man with wit, sir, is like one walking with his head in his own lantern, dazzling nobody but himself, and is sure to stumble into the bargain. I know it; therefore I say it—I, who have flogged—”

“Belay that! I like your lantern well, old chap; a man with his head in it must always stand in his own light. I’ll leave off wit, and save money.”

Here this learned discussion was suddenly interrupted by the joyous uproariousness of the party, which had, by this time, greatly increased. More tables and more seats were

shouted for, and, what with inverted wheelbarrows and other rural expedients, in a short time, every one found himself tolerably comfortable, as Jack paid for all.

At length, every one having grown tired with unmeaning noise, the shouts for a song became nearly unanimous.

The coxswain, constituted by his dignity as master of the revels, was requested to set the example. He very modestly said, he did not know that he could sing, but he would try, and he hoped the gen'l'm'n would back him in the chorus. He was rather dubious if he should make himself heard; but, if his voice was rather low, he trusted that the company would help him out a little. As he and his shipmates belonged to a frigate, and the sarciest in the sarvice, he would give them the frigate song, if he had sufficient voice.

The company very politely agreeing to pardon all deficiencies, and the coxswain's quid having been duly removed and laid on one side

for future mastication, and the silence being complete, he roared out "All proudly, all proudly," so terrifically, that all, except his own messmates, started, and there was a general laugh at the man with the small voice. Silence being again restored, the song proceeded thus :

" All proudly, all proudly, sails on the beateous swan,
As she breasts the wave that gently ripples by her ;
So our gallant frigate glides as proudly, proudly on,
For no milk-white swan in beauty can come nigh
her.

" Now chorus, my lads.

Then sing hip ! he, yo, yo, yo !

He, yo, yo, yo !

The lads who have got a frigate for their home
In comfort will live, wherever they may go,
And honour will gain, wherever they may roam,
Yo, yo, yo !

All swiftly, all swiftly, the royal eagle darts
The dark sky through, and the cloud that's swell'd
with thunder ;

As swiftly, as swiftly, the sea our frigate parts,
Whilst the gale is rushing on, and the waves roar
loudly under.

Then sing hip ! he, yo, yo, yo !

He, yo, yo, yo !

The lads who have got a frigate for their home
In comfort will live, wherever they may go,
And honour will gain, wherever they may roam,
Yo, yo, yo !

All grandly, all grandly, the vivid lightning sends
The arrows of death through the tempest dreadly
roaring ;

But grander, far grander, is the terror that attends
Our double-shotted guns when a broadside we are
pouring.

Then sing hip ! he, yo, yo, yo !

He, yo, yo, yo !

The lads who have got a frigate for their home
In comfort will live, wherever they may go,
And honour will gain, wherever they may roam,
Yo, yo, yo !"

This song was so much to the taste of the

cognoscenti assembled, that it was twice encored, and even the coxswain's voice was a little shaken as he led the last chorus the last time. The "double-shotted guns" was a fine mouthful for them all, and they made the most of it.

Indeed, several idle fellows liked the song and the grog that accompanied it so well, that they were much inclined to enter, and, perhaps, would so have done, had it not been for "these vile guns."

The sage man in black rags, who had fathomed the mysteries of duodecimals and flogged boys, was in the midst of a critical dissertation on the merits of this song, and directing his discourse to Peter, when Peter himself was called upon to oblige the gentlemen.

Peter hemmed, and was amiably diffident; but, as he still thought, notwithstanding the mental eye-salve administered to him by the pedagogue, that he was a wit, and as, under that impression he had composed a song, under that impression, also, he was determined to

sing it ; and, with a sly, deprecating look at the man in black rags, of whom he seemed already to have a very wholesome awe, he sang these words in a mincing little tune, that might have been set to music for a child's penny trumpet.

“ As life, we know, is but a jest,
Yet punning always life will give ;
As punning is of jests the best,
So who puns best, the best must live.
For punning sits upon a throne—
At least he oft enthroned sits—
And if with tyrants seldom known,
Yet rules he with the king of wits.

“ Chorus !

Then pun away,
Pun, pun all day,
At night with puns be busy :
Pun, pun all round,
Mix sense with sound,
Till sense itself grow dizzy.

I freely state, in this free state,
 Punning has state and honour much,
And that both Houses gaping wait,
 To rouse them at his magic touch.
The ar is found no bar to it ;
 And counsel seek it like a fee ;
It on the Bench will try to sit,
 And grin with wiggy gravity.
 Then pun away,
 Pun, pun all day,
 At night with puns be busy ;
 Pun, pun all round,
 Mix sense with sound,
 Till sense itself grow dizzy.

When in our graves at length we lie,
 We there engrave a lie above,
And on our very tombstones try
 A pun—or worse—for hate put love.
Thus all through life we lose the sense
 In seeking sound. When all is done,
Without a pun, I judge from hence,
 Life's either punishment or pun.
 Then pun away,
 Pun, pun all day,
 At night with puns be busy ;

Pun, pun all round,
Mix sense with sound,
Till sense itself grow dizzy."

Poor Peter, at the conclusion of his song, looked around for applause that was not; and the threadbare Mr. Ricketts shook his long head very ominously. It was Greek to the natives, and something as incomprehensible to the tars.

"Yaw, aw, gaw," said the chawbacons, which was a comment upon it quite as good as the text.

"It is too gumptious for us," said the seamen.

So Peter Drivel turned up the snub end of his nose, and pronounced the whole set vulgar: thereupon issue was joined with the schoolmaster, and much excellent, but unrecorded argument ensued.

Then were sung "The Bay of Biscay," "Lovely Nan," and "Far, far at sea," the

words of which, as they are generally known, and each may be bought for the fraction of a farthing, we will generously omit. Hitherto, those of the frigate had borne all the expense, both of the singing and the drink. At length, the coxswain cried, "Spell ho!"

"Spell ho!" said all the seamen.

"Will none of you shore-going chaps tail on to the song halliards, and aloft with it? Not a song from any of you?"

Here there was much awing and guffawing from the countrymen; and, at last, a most suspicious-looking fellow, with long shanks, covered with leathern gaiters of the stoutest, said as how he would try to oblige the gentlemen.

When asked, "What ship?"—that is, "Who are you?"—he candidly confessed that he was called Poaching Philip, but he was not a poacher—not he—only a nocturnal sportsman; indeed, he was altogether a sporting character, and, as such, he would sing them a sporting song; and he begged the gentlemen of the sea

would chorus the gentlemen of the shore as heartily as they themselves had been chorussed. This was promised ; and off he started with the following bold hunting song :

“ Sir Rory’s across his Blue Ruin,
Sir Hickory Grub’s in the saddle,
The huntsmen are up from the New Inn,
Then why do we stand fiddle-faddle?
Pr’ythee cast off the hounds in a twinkling,
The scent is as strong as a dandy’s ;
This morning, my lads, I’ve an inkling,
Some will find of what nature the land is.

“ Now, my lads, all for the chorus. Hand us your whip, master carter,” and, smacking the whip. he sang out—

Ride away, ride away,
Over hill, over dale,
Hedge or ditch be no stay,
And the man that shall quail
Or crane at a fence,
Let him take himself hence,
He shall not ride with us to-day, to-day,
He shall not ride with us to-day!

The Reverend George Dumper is down, sirs,
Him, his curate rides carefully over ;
The squire's racer has just touched his crown, sirs,
No harm ! A thick scull's a good cover !
Three fops from St. James's lie sprawling ;
Lord Whiffing is crying, " O lor !" sirs.
" O stop me !" a cockney is bawling,
And the doctor is hunting his horse, sirs.
Ride away, ride away,
Over hill, over dale,
Hedge or ditch be no stay,
And the man that shall quail
Or crane at a fence,
Let him take himself hence,
He shall not ride with us to-day, to-day,
He shall not ride with us to-day !

The game ones push on like the lightning,
They measure no distance by miles, sirs,
The reins not a soul is seen tightening,
And Reynard is at his last wiles, sirs.
We are in at the death like true heroes,
And O, 'twas a glorious run, sirs !
We've ended, in style, what th' " O dear O's !"
And milksops had only begun, sirs.

Ride away, ride away,
Over hill, over dale,
Hedge or ditch be no stay,
And the man that shall quail
Or crane at a fence,
Let him take himself hence,
He shall not ride with us to-day, to-day,
He shall not ride with us to-day !”

The poacher succeeded much better than Peter. All present declared it to be a good song, and, as they had all joined in singing it, that it was well sung. Now, the dirty little schoolmaster had, during the last exhibition, made himself very conspicuous by beating time with his stick. He was, on that account, presumed to have an ear for music, and a song was demanded. The demand was rejected; it was then enforced by the alternative of drinking salt-water. At this very charitable suggestion, three shock-headed youths, with the ostler's watering-pail, made off, with “an obedient start, for the beach,” in order to borrow of the

English Channel a sufficiency of fluid. Mr. Pedagogue Ricketts, seeing things beginning to look rather desperate, shook his tattered and sable habiliments, threw an additional quantity of pomp and gravity into his countenance, took off his well-worn and browned hat, that age had made pliable, and squeezing it into a three-cornered shape, clapped it under his arm, and in a strong, but rather melodious voice, sang very slowly :

“ Here am I, *ass* in præsenti,

Great Doctor Birch !

Master of scholars nine-and-twenty,

Oh ! Doctor Birch !

Learn—~~yes~~—yes—and very grave I

Am, yet when, in mirth, a stave I

Sing, 'tis amas, amat, amavi !

Great Doctor Birch !

You see this hat—three-corner'd—loop-ed

Of Doctor Birch,

Was once oft doff'd in court of Cupid

By Doctor Birch.

Then, pretty girls, I did adore 'em,
Genitive horum, harum, horum ;
But now I'm a pattern of decorum,
Meek Doctor Birch !"

This short song was honoured by the well-judging company with an encore ; indeed, they found it very relishing and acceptable, as they were quite sure they did not understand it.

There was no occasion for the salt water. The scene was becoming glorious, and the room had, by this time, become crowded to suffocation ; still, the mirth and the singing proceeded.

I might record many more songs, all excellent in their way, and which, probably I, the ancient mariner, alone know ; for who, of all those jovial fellows that were so happy on this June afternoon at the Plough, now exist ?—is there one ?—probably not. The Plough !—Alas ! the plough of one generation passes over the grave of another ; the crop of death never fails. But I am getting prosy again, whilst my

merry men are all singing and shouting. I will record but one more of their songs—the loudest and the last.

There was still an hour of daylight left, when the report of a gun from the frigate rebounded along the peaceful shores. None just then were thinking about their wave-borne home. There was the signal flying at the peak for the barge's return; and, in the offing, six noble line-of-battle ships sailing majestically in a line, with a Commodore's broad pennant flying at the main of the largest. The breeze had sprung up, the frigate had shown her number, and signal was made for her to weigh and join immediately.

One of the swiftest-footed lads who had shared the seamen's generosity at the Plough, was despatched to Jaspar Hall to acquaint Captain Oliphant with the news. It was well that this prudent step had been taken, for he was just then in that happy state of oblivion to all maritime affairs, that he had utterly forgot-

ten that such a thing as an eight-and-thirty existed.

During this time, all the Belladonnas filled their glasses, stood up, and respectfully drank the health of their Captain; and then concluded their festivities by singing their ship's song, which must be regarded merely as a common Jack's song, and was, I am inclined to think, the production of punning Peter.

"She is a frigate tight and gay,
As ever dash'd aside the spray,
Or conquer'd in a well-fought fray—
The saucy Belladonna.

'There's not a shipmate in the craft,
Who has not at all danger laught,
We're tried and true, both fore and aft,
On board the Belladonna.

Our skipper he's true heart of oak,
Is brave and kind, and loves his joke,
And bread no braver man e'er broke
On board the Belladonna.

Our first leeftenant's a jolly dog,
Though now and then he'll stop our grog,
But that's all right—for we never flog
On board the Belladonna.

Agin' the second, third, and fourth,
We nothing says—they're men of worth;
We wish 'em all soon a better berth
On board the Belladonna

Our master, with his deep sea-lead,
His compass, and his chart outspread,
Blessings be on his old grey head
From the lads of the Belladonna.

With his dips, and his backy, and cheeses
Dutch;
Our jolly purser don't cheat us much;
Of course, we expects a little touch
On board the Belladonna.

Then there's our waggish midshipmites,
Who knocks up rows and douses lights,
Eyes! how they loves, and drinks, and fights
On board the Belladonna.

And there's our boatswain, red-faced Pipes,
Good in the main, though fond of swipes,
And sometimes gives us precious wipes
On board the Belladonna.

Our gunner's good, and so's old Plug ;
May they ne'er want shot or a foaming jug,
And of wear and tear stand well the tug
On board the Belladonna.

Look at the manly, fine-hearted crew,
In dangers, storms, in battle true,
England's pride is her jackets blue,
On board the Belladonna."

The last verse was boisterously chanted out, when word was brought that the Captain was walking with Miss Belmont towards the barge, which had been left with two boat-keepers, who had been relieved every half-hour.

There was a hurrah, and a rush for the beach. Not a man of that fine boat's crew was drunk, though two or three of the weakest-headed were a little fresh. The Captain stepped

in the boat, the oars were tossed up, and "Give way together, my lads," was the word; and off she flew towards the frigate, Captain Oliphant standing in the stern-sheets, conspicuously in the last rays of the setting sun, and kissing his hand to a lady on shore, who, of course, according to the prescribed laws for such matters made and provided, kept waving, in return, her white handkerchief. It was a very pretty sight, altogether, though a little common-place. There were some forty of the countrymen attended the crew to the beach, full of admiration, who yawed, and guffawed in style, and pronounced the Belladonnas as "moighty foine folk."

And so they were in truth!

Now this is a faithful description of what ~~we~~, men-of-war's-men, call a *spre* on shore.

CHAPTER XI.

'The course of true love never did run smooth.'

SHAKESPEARE.

WHAT discords are to a well-concerted piece of music, shadows to a beautifully executed picture, and a short, a very short fit of pouting to a lovely woman, is a little dulness to a novel.

◆ Some repose is necessary, some dulness indispensable. The difficulty is, in what shape to serve it up. Modern fiction-writers, in general, throw in more than a fair share of this commendable quality, in the shape of long and unintelligible love speeches. Others have a pe-

cular facility of being muddily metaphysical; others, immeasurably moral.

The sinfulness of sin is a very good thing to discourse upon, but tedious. The sorrowfulness of sorrow, or, in stronger terms still, the woefulness of woe, might serve the purpose; but as I am, for one so aged, of rather a cheerful disposition, I cannot make up my mind to use either of these subjects, so precious unto dulness.

Indeed, I have a very consoling view of everything. I think that the world has already been at its worst—that the stream of improvement runs with a current so wide and so resistless, that it must carry mankind forward into the still and blessed lake of happiness that Christianity has, for nearly two thousand years, been preparing for wearied and persecuted humanity.

What are now the impediments that lie in its onward course? A few old turretted prejudices, in which despotism still contrives to find strong holds, and a few principles of levelling

destruction, that would undermine its banks—those banks, that the wisdom of ages has thrown up, in order to keep the torrent of human events in its only secure course. These are all that I can discover to prevent this grand consummation. I shall not live to see it, but those who will live immediately after me probably will. That will be the time when men, gloriously imbued with the divine *spirit* of Christianity, shall forget to hate each other or contend for its *forms*, and universal humanity, covered, as it were, with a mantle of righteousness, shall go forth rejoicing, seeing in every face happiness, and meeting on every brow the welcome of brotherly love.

I have prophesied—I have done. My fit of dulness is past, at least of that dulness which I meant to be, after the manner of novelists, dull above my ordinary dulness.

After this repose, we now resume our narrative.

When the barge arrived on board the Bella-

donna, the command to let fall, and sheet home the topsails, had just been given. The boat was soon hoisted in, and all sail made to join the squadron, which was now nearly half hull down.

Captain Oliphant, not hoping to come up with his superior officer—who he was, he was at a loss to conjecture—that evening, ordered the best look-outs to be kept, and retired to his cabin, in a very unusual state of mind, a deeply reflecting man. His glaring deficiencies, now for the first time perceived, startled him into a real and wholesome humility. We will leave him in deep rumination, now on the mental, now on the corporeal excellencies of Rosa Belmont, and debating whether he should not, for a time, beg to be superseded in his command, and go to Oxford or to Cambridge for three or four years. Rosa would not have liked him so well if he had done so.

Mr. Rubasore, replete with the worst passions that degrade our common nature, immediately that he found himself in London, repaired to

his attorney, a man who held his confidence, and who, for the proper consideration, was ready to employ all the wiles of the law to aid his client in the accomplishment of any purpose, however nefarious it might be.●

To move the Court of Chancery for an injunction upon Captain Oliphant, and to serve his attorney with a notice so shaped that an answer was necessary, in order to bring the Captain into contempt of court, seemed to be the only feasible plan. This, Mr. Sharpus was ready to do at once; but Mr. Rubasore, before he commenced the character of a litigant, determined, once more, to attempt that of a lover, and thus make one grand effort to recover his lost ground. This he determined to commence by an epistle—a love-letter; yes, at forty-eight, Mr. Rubasore sat him down, in a murky coffee-room, to write a love-letter.

I pity him. When I was myself young, and was impelled to write to my Seraphina, my Adeline, or my Adalgunda, for those were the

three loves of my younger days—when I used to sit down to write to any of these, the glowing thoughts rose in crowds, million-like, as the gnats dance in the rays of the setting sun; and the slow, the tedious pen hobbled after them like a cripple on crutches. For one sentiment written, five hundred were soliloquized away to the unreplying walls. Those were the glorious times for love compositions; but alas! after my Seraphina, who was a governess in a nobleman's family, had united herself to poverty and his third son; after Adeline, who was an heiress, had married her own too handsome land agent; and, after all this, when, at forty-two, I had to write a letter of congratulation to Adelgunda, who was about to be married to a German baron—at that age, I know how horrible it was to sit down to write on love. I did it, however, making, in the midst of my congratulations, a last appeal for mercy to my breaking heart. I was not consoled; for the baroness had to go and look for the chateau of her husband *en Espagne*.

Having felt all this, therefore, bad as was the man, I pity him when he was forced, at last, to try, by the eloquence of his pen, to regain a heart that he once, but foolishly, thought he had secured. The reader shall see how he acquitted himself, for I have a copy of his letter.

“ ROSA,

“ I seem like one standing on a shifting sand. Whilst the tempest is howling above my head, whilst on my right-hand and on my left, the waves come rushing around me like monsters of the deep, in order to devour me, even my foothold on the earth seems slipping from beneath me, and an inevitable, a cruel, and undeserved end awaits me.

“ And I suffer this—I, who have falsely and foolishly placed my all of happiness in this world upon the sand-bank of your principles. O Rosa, you cannot, you dare not, thus destroy me! Think not that I am old—it is a

delusion : the customs of the world, the very voice of nature dictate, that some years more experience should be on the side of the husband. Youth is proverbially blind ; and, if the blind lead the blind, will there not then be mutual destruction ?

“ But, if you deceive me, Rosa, then, O then, I am old indeed !—then, I shall have nothing more to do in this world than to prepare for the grave. When four years ago, as you lay on my bosom, a sweet combination of love and innocence, when you attested the silver lamp of night, and the innumerable host of the sky-encrusting stars, that I, I only, should share your heart, and, in due time, your blessed hand ; you were then just, upright, noble. When the vows that we meant to be eternal were made the more binding in the sanctity of keeping that sweetest of secrets inviolable, till we should, in due time, step before the world as man and wife—were those vows, I ask you, made by your beautiful lips, with all the apparent sincerity of a saint,

and all the passion of a devotee — were they made, I repeat, to be shamefully, disgustingly broken, and, with them, my confiding heart ?

“ But I will,—I do believe,—that you were entrapped by the wiles of a man, I hesitate not to say, practised in the arts of seduction. Believing this, I forgive it. But our solemn, our loving contract, though now no longer a secret, is still binding upon us. I will never renounce it—never !

“ When your heart was uncontaminated,—when your soul was as pure as the transparent blue above you, and into which your eyes were so fond to penetrate, then you confessed that you loved me—that I was your hope, your trust, your happiness ! What have I since done to forfeit this felicitous distinction ? Have I been a harsh, an unkind guardian ? Tax your memory, take it back to your very earliest infancy, and then ask yourself, what grievance had you ever unremoved, what joy repelled, what wish ungratified ? Could guardian, could

brother, could father, have been more kind, more tender? Why this change? Is it that my hair has grown a little more grey, or that time has written upon my countenance the history of three or four more years? What vainest of vanities are these! What man, even amongst the finest of our English youths, than whom in the wide world none are finer,—which among them would say he wished to be loved for his person?

“Do you not know, Rosa, that I, as your guardian, have it in my power to remove you wherever I choose, hundreds of miles away from the object of your childish, and, I trust, transient infatuation? But could I do this—or anything to my Rosa, that would imply harshness? Never!

“You have not changed. You are noble, and therefore change you cannot. You are made for happiness, and great happiness seems made for you. Wherever you appear, wherever you move, existence wears the look of spring, and sorrow and woe seem impossible. Yet with

all these high capabilities in your favour, happiness shall not be yours, nor any one's, unless it be sought for by the light of principle.

“ If you extinguish that heaven-born light in your bosom, and hereafter you seek for happiness, I tell you, nor youth, nor beauty, nor riches, shall give it you. The spring, with its sweet flowers,—the summer, with her joyous sunshine, — the autumn, with her glorious abundance,—and the winter with his harvest of glad hearts,—all, all shall refuse it you.

“ Earth will not bestow it upon you, and heaven will deny it ; for how, Rosa, could you plead for mercy at the foot of the mercy-seat, when you seek deliberately and perfidiously to destroy your oldest, your best, your only true friend, by a breach of promise, and a violation of principle, that is shocking in every one—in an accomplished and angelic woman like yourself, positively revolting.

“ Write to me only to say that the film has fallen from your eyes, and that you again see

what is consistent with your own honour and the happiness of both, and then, the now chiding and heart-broken guardian will fly to your feet, and there confess himself your happy lover, and future all-devoted, all-indulgent husband !

“ Till I receive your answer, I count the hours by the pulsations of my heart, which throbs only to misery.

“ Your anxious lover,

“ REUBEN RUBASORE.”

“ Saracen’s Head,
London.”

Now, I think this was tolerably well for a gentleman of fifty. For passionate nonsense, I don’t think I could have beaten it myself at twenty-five, though I might at twenty. However, he was not ashamed to seal it with due gravity, and despatched it, by that night’s post, to Jaspar Hall.

Though I am but little successful in recounting a love story, yet, having thus far

entered into the affair, and by giving Mr. Rubasore's letter, put Miss Belmont, in some manner, upon her trial, it is but fair that we give part of her reply. It ran thus :

“ Dear Reuben,” which was scratched over with her pen—“ My dear sir,” served in the same manner, and then there remained thus :

“ HONOURED GUARDIAN,

“ The indivisibility of thought has puzzled, from the earliest ages, all the penetration of metaphysicians; its indestructibility has also caused much doubt among the learned; but whether passion be born of thought, or only consistent with it—or have nothing to do with it whatever, to which last opinion I much incline, is a matter still to be debated in my mind. In that learned work on the Rosicrucian Mysteries, which you recommended to me so strongly, I find it distinctly laid down as a principle, that man, I use the generic term, is divided by nature into four ages, and in each

age he has a different individuality. 'This is corroborated by Jean Jacques Rousseau. What Diderot and Voltaire has said upon the subject we will come to by-and-bye.

“ Now, it is manifest, by these and other excellent authorities, that youth is not answerable for the acts of its childhood, maturity for the acts of its youth, nor senility for the acts of its maturity, seeing that, in these different stages, the identity of the individual has changed.

“ Now, honoured guardian, you will observe how logical I am ; though one stage is not answerable for the acts of the other, each succeeding stage ought to correct the errors of the preceding one. For does not Hobbes lay down the maxim, that man is an improving animal ? Now for the deduction. As a child, and in my childhood, you caused me to fancy that I fell in love with you, because you told me that you had fallen in love with me. Very well ; and then because you told me that those who love

each other must do all that each other asked, you made me swear, (I believe you are right when you say it was by the moon,) that I would marry you when I had become of age, and until that time, would keep it a secret. Now, honoured guardian, according to our principles, there was nothing wrong in all this; indeed, in the Romances, and other French writers, which you have wished me to read, I find many similar instances; but, as lately, I suddenly passed from my childhood into my youthhood, or juvenility, I acknowledge no longer the acts of the individual that constituted my childhood, but must make my youth do all it can to repair that very foolish error of mine, of fancying that I was ever in love with a person old enough, almost, to be my grandfather, and also must hold myself no longer responsible for any engagement that my identity as a child might have entered into.

“ This is logic. I will give you French

quotations for it, by-and-bye. But, to pursue my subject. The individual that occupied my identity as a child, had no aversion to longitudinal faces, iron-grey hair, and switch pig-tails, especially the latter; for that individual was fond of pulling it about, and hanging thereunto dolls, bandelors, and other playthings, all similar amusements to which, my juvenility abhors. Perhaps, if we both live so long, in my senility the taste for such occupations may return; and then, if we should happen both to be single, I may, or to speak more philosophically, the individual occupying my identity may, be induced again to renew the matrimonial engagement but understand me perfectly—NEVER TILL THEN!

“ You see, honoured guardian, the pains I have taken to work out the principles that you were so anxious to instil—through the course of French reading, that you recommended to me in the convent—into my youthful bosom.

“ I am now going to advert to the indivisibility and indestructibility of thought as bearing

upon this argument ; and shall, as I suppose that you have not Voltaire by you, quote some pages from his eighth volume——”

What these pages were it is impossible to say, as the above is the only part of this able and argumentative epistle that exists ; for, when Mr. Rubasore had read it thus far, or perhaps to the end, he tore it angrily in halves, and flung it among the ashes.

Thus preserved by one of those curious accidents that sometimes occur, it is to be hoped that this fragment which was not consumed may go down to posterity, with this singularly veracious account of the old Commodore, as a sample of Miss Rosa's powers of composition.

As this communication convinced Mr. Rubasore, that the arts of imploring would be entirely useless, instead of cajolery he determined to employ coercion. That he might do so most effectually, and, at the same time,

quite legally, he repaired forthwith to his friend Mr. Sharpus ; and, as he could not be in worse company, we will there very gladly leave him.

CHAPTER XII.

“ With words of mystery, the good old man
Screen’d his friend’s fault, reproving whilst he
screen’d.”

OLD PLAY.

GREAT is the pity that an historian cannot conduct three or four operations simultaneously, and give his reader the trifling privilege of ubiquity. I boast not. I am but a worn-out, aged mariner. I have not art in writing. I have no other means of bringing my incidents forward in a level line, than those which the cat employs in conveying her young brood from one place to another. As she takes them up in her mouth, one by one, and drops each before

she goes back for another, so do I treat my characters.

On bringing thus forward the love affairs of his nephew, we have left the grim old Commodore a long way behind. Rather a tough mouthful, considering the state of my gums, (teeth are matters of history with me,) for me to carry with my mouth metaphorical, and place abreast in the line of time with Captain Oliphant. But, as men more foolish than myself have performed exploits much greater, I shall even attempt it. Should I founder, or only flounder, by the way, let it be remembered, that I apologized in anticipation.

Sir Octavius Bacuissart repaired with all haste to Plymouth. Arrived there, he waited on the admiral, received his appointment and instructions, and then immediately went on board the Thunderbolt, and hoisted his broad pennant. At the bare rumour of this appointment, the Thunderbolts were struck all of a heap. The officers were most anxious to get leave to change, and

the seamen to exchange without leave. Of the mids, it might be truly said, (only it was not *strictly* true,) that they put on sackcloth, and covered their heads with ashes; however, they grew dolorous over their grog, and began to calculate the exact degree of pain that the cat-o'-nine-tails usually inflicted upon remarkably young and tender skins. 'There was a little—a very little—talk about jumping overboard.

This Thunderbolt was the finest two-decker then in the navy. She was rated as an eighty-gun ship, but carried many more than eighty pieces of ordnance. Hitherto, every one who belonged to her took so much pride in all that concerned her, that they thought to be a Thunderbolt added to the individual dignity of each. This consideration made men and officers resolve to give the old Commodore a short trial; and they were the more confirmed in this, from seeing a great many of the Terrifics—the very Terrifics that the old Commodore had prevented from joining the mutiny by flogging so much,

volunteer to serve again under their old commander.

Sir Octavius had paid his first visit, introduced himself to all his officers, grinned good-humouredly at the crew, and inspected the noble ship thoroughly ; he returned to the hotel on shore, leaving the Thunderbolts ample food for speculation. They saw, at once, that the old Commodore was not a man to be trifled with ; but, upon the whole, the impression that he made upon them was rather favourable.

In the course of a few days, Mr. Underdown, the patient man, joined his friend, Sir Octavius, and reported that Mrs. Oliphant, and one of her daughters, apparently a very accomplished young lady, were happily domesticated at Trestletree Hall, and that Miss Rebecca had most solemnly promised to discard her stable-acquaintance, receive her various masters into favour, and reform her manners altogether.

All this was most gratifying to her father. The intelligence also of the arrival of Mr.

Underdown had spread, and the good news soon reached on board the Thunderbolt. The reputation he had for courageous calmness, sound discretion, and an over-abounding share of the milk of human kindness, though he would never belong to the navy, was very general in it.

The Commodore's health was now nearly re-established. The consciousness of usefulness, activity of mind and body, a rigidly enforced though self-imposed temperance, but, above all, the hopes of a glorious fight, had, apparently, given back to him some of the best years of his life. No doubt, moments, nay, hours of anguish he was compelled to undergo, when memory would, in spite of himself, present to him his drowning nephew, Augustus, and his stern and ghost-like mother. Sins will claim their penalty, even when the tide of our prosperity is at the highest.

After the Commodore had been at Plymouth about a fortnight, one fine Sunday morning he and Underdown repaired on board; his broad

pennant was hoisted, the signal made for his squadron to weigh, and about an hour before noon, they stood out of the Sound in excellent order, and then turned their heads up Channel. Everything was in the best order on board the Thunderbolt; and, when she was under sail, all the weather-braces hauled taut, and the decks swept, the ship's company was mustered at divisions, and Sir Octavius went round the decks, and surveyed them, man by man. How they felt under the penetrating flashes of his single eye may be understood by one of the fore-castle men declaring that the look had gone right through his skull, and had given him a pain on the back of the head, which lasted till grog-time.

However, the review seemed satisfactory to Sir Octavius; for, when he returned to the quarter-deck, he publicly expressed his approbation of their appearance and sailor-like deportment to their captain, which commendation was highly gratifying, coming from the lips of one so thoroughly experienced as was the old Commodore.

Captain Edward Egerton, for, on this cruise, the old Commodore did not disdain to have a captain of the ship with him, was a gentlemanly man, of about forty years of age, a good officer, a good sailor, and, perhaps, a disciplinarian, a little too strict. This is a world of contradictions, and thus we are not wrong in stating that justice may, sometimes, be dealt forth unjustly. That is to say, punishments may be administered, strictly according to her presumed laws, and yet, administered most villanously.

Now, Captain Egerton understood not this. There were the articles of war, the written instructions, and the customs of the navy. The men knew them as well as himself. If they infringed them, it was the delinquents, and not he, who brought the torture to their backs. He was but the positive instrument, the appointed automaton, who set the cruel machinery in action. It was thus he argued; bewailed the blindness of British seamen, called himself a most humane man, and flogged on.

Now, with the best intentions, and the most charitable feelings, he was a greater tyrant than was ever the old Commodore at the worst of his tyranny ; and the aggregate amount of torture he inflicted upon an equal number of men was more than double. The punishment in the Thunderbolt was, taken altogether, tremendous. Yet, in one sense, the ship's company did not perceive this, for Captain Egerton never flew into a passion, and though, regularly, he turned the hands up for punishment every day, and the cat flew about terribly, yet he did it with so much evident reluctance, talked to the poor culprit with so much sorrow upon the heinousness of his faults, and so plainly showed what article of war had been violated, or what naval custom disregarded, that the crew shrugged up their shoulders, found they could not understand it, and concluded that Captain Egerton was really the compassionate gentleman that he gave himself out to be.

But this captain, with the most honourable

intentions, committed the radical mistake of supposing that punishment was, and ought to be, the end of crime, and not looking upon it only as a means to prevent that end. How few formerly understood this distinction ! If, in a crew of five hundred men there were fifty flogged regularly for the fault of drunkenness, and it was found that, under this regularity of punishment, that the drunkenness increased instead of diminished, that particular kind of punishment should cease. It evidently did not work out its end, and the inflictors were only so much the deeper on the debtor's side of the devil's book, for so much unnecessary torture, and outrages so vile upon humanity.

The old Commodore had much sounder notions upon the subject, though, in the early part of his career, his passions too often prevented his acting upon them. He had now a little surprise in reserve for the Thunderbolts.

It was time to pipe for dinner.

“ Shall we go to punishment, Sir Octavius,”

said Captain Egerton, "before we pipe to dinner? there is a very heavy black list."

"You may turn the hands up. -Will you favour me with that paper?"

The hands were turned up, accordingly, and the prisoners brought aft in custody of the master-at-arms, on the main-deck. As usual, the principal offences were drunkenness, and omissions of duty, or impertinences consequent upon it.

The old Commodore read the list aloud, bidding each culprit stand forth, as his name was called.

"Hark ye, my lads," said the old gentleman, "it is very lucky for you that I have happened to ship myself on a Sunday. Now, mark ye me, I seldom forgive; but I am very easily managed. We will not flog on a Sunday, for the sake of the scourged and crucified Author of our religion. I do not think that He would approve of it."

The men were struck with astonishment, and

when he reverently took off his hat, and showed the dark mark of the enemy's sword, on his bald head, as he referred to our Saviour, for the first time for many months, something like religious awe stole over them.

“ Now, my men,” he continued, “ as I think suspense a torture almost as bad as the cat, all I can do is to request Captain Egerton's permission to tear up this list;” then, casting it over the gangway, into the sea—“ and may its contents be borne away from our memory as the wind scatters those fragments before us.

“ But you must all of you remember that I have served my country before most of you were born. I say it, not as a boast, but to impress it upon you, that I know my duty, and know how to make you do yours. I can manage you; and, I tell you, I am myself very easily managed. I seldom pardon, though I am slow to look for offence. Act upon that. Show me, my men, the true spirit of British sailors, and

I'll show you the indulgence, the love of a father to his own family. I intend to keep a black list myself. I hope my command will be over before its first page is filled. Now tumble down to your dinners and your grog; remember there is a stern hand over you: but which will never descend in punishment upon you until you bring it down upon yourselves;—and then, beware!"

To use their own phrase, the men were taken aback. Such wholesale forgiveness made them almost suspect the humanity that produced it. Be it as it may, a happier crew than the Thunderbolt's, men and officers, did not dine that day.

The Commodore paid every attention to the state of discipline of his squadron. He would repair from ship to ship, and mark the expertness of the crews at their guns; examine the various arrangements for the battle; speak in a fatherly manner to the crews, and generally ask to look at the list of those down for punish-

ment, and either get it entirely remitted, or procure some other visitation than the cat.

The old Commodore, in about the short space of three weeks, had so mystified the whole of the crew and officers, by his unexpected conduct, and had made them so happy, almost in spite of themselves, by his mild and parental conduct, that they began to fear the change had extended to his moral attributes so much, that, when the occasion should offer itself, he would not, as formerly, show fight.

This opinion certainly proved that a low tone of moral feeling was prevalent in the navy, the result only of ignorance and of prejudice—a feeling that allied cruelty with courage, and too little regard for the happiness of those depending upon us, with great capabilities of destroying those who are opposed to us.

This was also an error that Sir Octavius was about to dissipate.

Already was his small but gallant squadron in the finest fighting order, when, passing along

to its destination, the Commodore observed the Belladonna lazily at anchor, it might be almost said under the windows of Jaspar Hall. The frigate had been, at his request, attached to his squadron. He certainly did not expect to find her in the situation we have described, as he supposed that his very gallant nephew was watching all comers and goers in the chops of the channel. However, the Commodore's astonishment would not have been so great, if he had known how much the lower rigging wanted setting up.

All this summer's night, Captain Oliphant made sail after the squadron; and next morning, at eight o'clock, the Belladonna was close under the Commodore's lee. The signal was made for him to go on board.

He jumped into his gig, was soon alongside the Thunderbolt, and, with a few springs, the active youth stood astounded upon the quarter-deck. The sight that struck him made him start back three paces, as he exclaimed, in what was meant to be a soliloquy, but which was

heard distinctly by all present, "My precious old uncle, by everything ugly!"

Sir Octavius screwed his one dark eye earnestly into Oliver's fallen countenance, and flourished about his iron fin most fearfully, as he stood before his nephew, firmly upright, with not a vestige of his gout remaining.

Captain Oliphant took off his hat; and never, before or since, has been known to make so religiously respectful a bow, as he then did to his grim old uncle. The storm is coming, thought all; and so said many of those who stood within sight and hearing. The old boy is going to be himself again.

"Well?" was the gruff and monosyllabic greeting of the commander-in-chief.

"There," said the impudent nephew, a little recovered from the effects of his surprise, and extending his hand, in order to shake that of his relative.

"No!" was the Commodore's reply, suddenly substituting, for his right and living

hand, the iron hook and spike at the end of his left arm, which the young captain found himself grasping, ludicrously enough.

“ I hope I have not offended you, Sir Octavius,” said the nephew, drawing back, proudly enough, and letting go the cold iron, as if it had burned him.

“ Come here,” said the other, hooking him by the collar, with a jerk ; “ why were you yesterday off your station—at this crisis, especially ? ”

“ Sir Octavius, the master of the *Belladonna* thought that, if the sea got up high enough, she might roll away her lower masts, if the lower rigging were not set up afresh.”

“ Hum ! ” All this time, the old gentleman had been edging him nearer and nearer under the break of the poop, and out of the hearing of the officers—“ hum ! you have been setting up—a bad excuse. Now, you young dog, you have been after some girl or other. Neither I nor his majesty’s service will stand that, you

know ; and now that we are fairly within the cabin, you may as well shut the door, and tell me all about it."

But Captain Oliphant had so much to tell, and much of this so much, he feared, would be so little to his listener's liking, that he knew not how to begin.

" Well, nephew, I can tell you that you have been very indiscreet. We have good glasses on board ; and, though you might not have seen us, that white house, and those grounds, with a lady in white, hanging on the arm of a gentleman with a gold-laced cocked-hat, were very visible. Captain Egerton would be very glad to have your frigate ; and, take my word for it, there have been many ungainly remarks made at your expense. Now, mark you me, Noll ; I must reprimand you. You'll breakfast here, of course, and, afterwards, we must have some private conversation. Underdown is with me."

" I shall be most happy to see him, uncle."

“ Very well. Set up your lower rigging, indeed ! Just ring the bell. Steward, my compliments to Captain Egerton, and all the officers of the morning watch : and shall be happy in their company to breakfast. Here comes Underdown, looking as grave as a man who is going to be married.”

The meeting between Captain Oliphant and Horace Underdown was cordial ; and, as they had much to communicate to each other, they paced up and down together, in private, on the stern walk, whilst the Commodore’s guests assembled in the fore-cabin to breakfast.

When they had all arrived, and had placed themselves at the table, a little to the surprise of Captain Oliphant, Sir Octavius addressing Captain Egerton, said, “ Captain Egerton, I was a little angry with Captain Oliphant this morning, but he has fully explained to me the very important consideration that induced him to remain at anchor the greater part of yester-

day—considerations of a very secret nature, and which may compromise the interests of high-contracting parties, and lead to negotiations that may terminate in most consequential results.”

“ God bless me, Sir Octavius, waiting perhaps to convey some secret mission or important spy. Well, fair and open fighting for me, Commodore. What sort of fellow is this clandestine person, Captain Oliphant—got him on board ?”

“ I cannot say that he is on board the frigate exactly just now, but he soon will be. I must say it, who should not say it, that this clandestine, plotting person, whom the Commodore is so good as to allude to, is a very honest person; and I don't feel much disposed to hear him quizzed.”

“ No,” said one of the lieutenants, “ he may be employed to do a dirty act, for the good of his country; but the motive must cover the dishonour of it. What sort of looking personage is he ?”

“ Oh !” said Sir Octavius, “ very attentive to his lower rigging.”

“ But, perhaps, don’t look like a gentleman, after all. Now a good hat, and a good face under it, sets a man off. The top hamper’s the thing,” remarked another officer.

“ Captain Oliphant is really somewhat hampered like the person alluded to, top and bottom—but we will say no more of it,” said the Commodore, “ for government secrets, you know—hum—”

The nephew wondered much at this playful bantering on the part of his formerly so crusty uncle. At the moment that he slipped on board that morning, he fully believed that his uncle was gout-ridden, and making himself a torment to all about him at Trestletree Hall; and here he found him in health and command, covering his indiscretions, and playing the jocular host. He fervently blessed the change, yet much doubted its continuance.

The hearty breakfast was dispatched, and

much food and many compliments disposed of, when the company broke up, and the Commodore, Mr. Underdown, and Captain Oliphant retired, in order to avoid interruptions to their conference, into the after-cabin.

There was a good deal of solemnity in the deportment of Sir Octavius, and he commenced the conversation by impressively demanding his nephew's best attention ; he continued thus :

“ You have not, Oliver, hitherto shown much desire to cultivate my friendship. The fault was unquestionably mine. I avow it ; if you continue in this conduct, the fault will then be your own.”

Captain Oliphant promised all things.

“ Well, Oliphant, at my years, it is natural for us to arrange for those who must come after us. Thanks to my dear friend Underdown, notwithstanding my recklessness and my horror of all sorts of business, my estates are wonderfully improved, and my income more than doubled. Who, after my decease, Noll, is to enjoy all

this? Who, now poor Augustus is in heaven? That awful event, which, at first, threw me into a fit of brutish apathy and despondency, that lasted for years, has, at length, opened my eyes, and shown me to what little purpose I have hitherto lived, whilst I was living wholly for myself. You look surprised to hear me talk thus—I, who was famous formerly only for despotism and self-gratification. But, as I have worked out my evil into much misery and woe to those connected with me, the little good that is in me I will now endeavour to work out for their happiness. I cannot, perhaps, reform my manners, but I can my purposes.”

“ Your manners, Commodore!—why, I declare that I never heard you talk so much like a gentleman before.”

“ Your compliment, nephew, is a bitter reproof: never mind, man, it is a deserved one. Now, Noll, after this action, and an action we must have,—I wish that you would give up the service.”

“ Give up the service, Commodore ?—Give up my life !—my honour !”

“ Hear our friend out,” said the man of quietude. “ He has much reason for the proposition.”

“ Give up the service. Go and live near my Becky, and try to love her ;—and, Noll, whether you marry her or not, Underdown has documents to prove that there will be few to envy you on the score of wealth.”

“ God assist me,” said the young officer, a great deal moved. “ Uncle, give me the hand you refused me on the quarter-deck. How much have I mistaken your noble character ! But I am taken aback ; I am in irons, and have no power to brace round. Uncle, uncle, why before did I not better know you ?”

“ Know me now, and love me as much as you can. I have been a great sinner,—rascal, perhaps, would be the better term. This generous warmth pleases me, Noll. Now as to Becky, I cannot tell you ;—nor man’s speech,

nor angels—could tell you how I love that wench—love her, perhaps, most for her worst faults,—for her spirit, her wilfulness, and her audacity. —
Is she not beautiful, Oliver?”

“ She is very, very beautiful.”

“ And kindly, nobly-hearted, — bless her, bless her !”

“ She is all you say,” said Mr. Underdown, “ you have not been able to spoil her *quite*.”

“ Nor you to make her quite perfect,—hey, Horace? Cut you this time. Oliver, Oliver, try in time to love my child.”

“ I love her now ; I have ever loved her !”

“ Thank you. Could you, when we have improved her into the lady, marry and love her still? Reflect before you answer ; for all of mine, and much of Rebecca’s happiness, depends upon it.”

“ Say not *all*, uncle—do not say *all*. Had you thus spoken to me a month ago, one short month, I could have thanked you for all this lovingkindness upon my knees—for Rebecca is

most lovely, and I firmly believe rich in the best affections. I already love !”

The old man sank back dejectedly in his chair. At length, he murmured out, “ How completely, how repeatedly, has Augustus been revenged !”

“ That, Commodore, is not a christian’s remark,” said Mr. Underdown. “ Live and act up to your present principles, and your last years shall go down brightly in the sun of happiness. Augustus is with God, and from thence nothing so despicable as revenge can emanate. Say on, Oliphant, let us hear of your wooing, and we shall then judge of your chance of happiness and of ours.”

“ As far as my interests are concerned, nothing could be more satisfactory than this meeting. I, though not one month old in love, have already contrived to plunge myself, and she who is far dearer than myself, in difficulties and dilemmas. We sailors generally swing with a foul haüse, when we take up moorings in Love’s harbour.”

This was said without the fear of Peter and his *hems*! being before the eyes of the gallant Captain.

He then, with much maritime metaphor, related the cricket-match on the shingles, the youngster's danger of being drowned, and the subsequent meetings with Rosa. He described her exceeding beauty, the delicacy of her lofty brow and majesty of her countenance, the whiteness of her hands, and those deep-drawn wells of feelings, never to be spoken, her Moorish eyes. He grew eloquent upon her enthusiasm, and her accomplishments. He thought nothing less than a miracle could have blended so many apparently contradictory accomplishments in one person. He had got only thus far in his love-tale, when the old Commodore had already pardoned him for the disappointment that he had occasioned him in regard to his own daughter.

Mr. Underdown listened to all this with mute and absorbed attention.

Then the candid Captain spoke of the neg-

lected *morale* of her education, of her fortifying her mind with principles derived from infidel French essayists, and hardly more pure romance-writers, and that her religious instruction had been altogether neglected; for he felt assured she had yet to seek for her faith. But when, flushed with indignation, he told of all this as the iniquitous contrivance of the avaricious Rubasore, both his hearers started from their seats with horror, and even the well-regulated mind of Underdown was almost surprised into an oath.

The old Commodore swore and growled so awfully, that the rumbling was heard distinctly on the quarter-deck, which induced a pet-wag of a midshipman to walk up to Captain Eger-ton, and report, "that the fighting old Commodore had come on board again." And, upon being asked for an explanation, led his superior officer, nothing dreading the mast-head, within ear-shot of the storm.

We believe that the impertinence was par-

done for the sake of the joke, or if the punishment ensued, it was welcome for the same reason.

Next among the gentlemen in the cabin, there came under discussion the threats of Rubasore, and what was the probable course of action that he would pursue. Oliphant wished heartily that he was on shore. He doubted not the affection of Miss Belmont, but he was painfully fearful that her inexperience and enthusiasm would lead her to take some eccentric step that would not much redound to the credit of his future wife.

In cases like the present, Mr. Underdown had generally to play the Mentor to all the Telemachuses of his acquaintance. Before Captain Oliphant had finished, he had already made up his mind as to the necessary course of action.

“Commodore,” said he, a little waggishly, “what would the afterguard think had they heard a few of your late explosions?”

“That I was a d—d honest fellow, if they

only also heard of the rascally cause of them. May the devil, armed with——”

“ Hush !” said Underdown, placing his hand on the volcanic mouth of curses. “ You are not, Octavius, keeping the promise you so lately, and so solemnly, made me.”

“ Well, Horace, forgive me. I’m an old fool, that’s all. But this Rubasore is enough to make the angel Gabriel swear in the midst of his morning hymn.”

“ Why, this is as bad ; but let me ask you, and I ask it most seriously, with reference to future proceedings, what is your real opinion of the character of this Rosa Belmont ?”

“ Simply this, Horace. She is, like my daughter, a spoiled child—she from too much, and my Becky from too little, education.”

“ You are partly right : you would have said that Rosa had been crammed with accomplishments at the expense of sound moral education, and has therefore much to unlearn, or to relearn upon new bases ; and that poor Rebecca

has much to learn. How much they would improve each other !”

“ Much indeed !” said the Commodore.

“ How delightful if they could be brought together. They should take one another in tow by turns, and at last bring to abreast of each other, the two finest craft in the world. D—n it—where’s Peter Drivel ?”

As the last sentence was uttered *sotte voce*, it gained just what it deserved, neither attention nor answer.

At length, Mr. Underdown spoke thus, with a tone of decision that he never used excepting on those rare occasions when he was determined to crush all opposition.

“ Now listen to me, Commodore ; it is for the ultimate happiness of all. You must put me on shore immediately. There are several merchant vessels, now in sight, bound up Channel. One will do as good as another.”

“ Well, so you will desert me ?” said the Commodore, moodily ; “ I shall fall again into

one of my confounded passions, turn the ship inside out, and kick all my good resolutions overboard."

"I don't believe it, Commodore; for if I did, I would sooner lose my life than be away from you. You know not—none shall know until my death,—what a deep interest I have that you should henceforward act only upon the noble and heroic in your character."

"What is all this?"

"Nothing to the purpose, Octavius. What I am about to say is, have you no love-token, Oliphant, from the lady?—you must accredit me to her."

The Captain actually blushed. "I can write to her, can't I?" said he, looking amiably confused.

"Of course you can, and you will. But does she know your hand-writing? There must be no mistake in this business. We have a wily opponent in Rubasore."

"We have indeed! I am not sure that she

knows my hand-writing, inasmuch as I never wrote to her; and she is so great a scholar that I should be almost afraid of doing so."

"Just as I thought. Now, Captain, you must give me some token that I act for you. Come, man, don't be ashamed of it—what is it?"

At last, looking like a school-boy, who had been taken in the fact of stealing apples, he produced, from the inside of his waistcoat, a faded nosegay.

"She gave me this last night," said he.

"Pooh, man!—what's the use of this—can I prove the identity of this withered rubbish? And, as it must be two or three days before I see her, what will it be then?"

"I'll trouble you, Mr. Underdown, to give me my rubbish again. Had you seen the hand that plucked, or the eyes that smiled over them, you would not call those beautiful flowers rubbish."

“ But I have not. Oliphant, have you really nothing that belonged to her—nothing? Well, then, tell me some little speech that she may remember peculiar to you both, so that I may be enabled to say, ‘ Miss, *that* gentleman to whom you said, or who said to you, so and so ;’ the tenderer the better.”

“ Underdown, you grow worse and worse. I have got something of hers—but—but I stole it out of her work-basket when her head was turned away.”

“ To get her maid turned away after—what is it, Captain?”

“ Ah, I did not think of that ; but she had just been marking it with her delicate fingers, and thrust it out of sight in her basket when I approached.”

“ Is it her handkerchief?”

“ No.”

“ Then what in the name of wonder can it be?” said the Commodore ; “ it couldn’t have been a

mizen-topsail, for that would have been too large for a lady's basket ; nor a glove, for ladies only mark them when they dirty them."

" It was her silk stocking."

" Whew !" whistled the Commodore. " Blue blazes and brimstone ! The house will be ransacked, the servants suspected, and disquiet established, all because you have stolen a stocking too small for you to wear—I'll answer for it."

" Wear, Commodore ! what notions you must have ;—do you think that I would be guilty of petty larceny ?"

" Something very like it," said Underdown. " Oliphant, you did wrong."

" It was only an odd one !" said the poor fellow, quite discomfited.

" Where is it ?"

" Here !" and the purloiner took from within his bosom, a very nice little article, marked in letters that spoke well for the young lady's housewifery, R. O. S and the half of an A.

“ Now, are you not a pretty fellow to go on in this way ?” said the Commodore, enjoying his confusion. “ If you had stolen a shirt from a line, or committed any other open theft, why—but this privately stealing—O fie !”

“ Well, this will do,” said Underdown, drily. “ ‘ The gentleman,’ I must say to her, ‘ the gentleman in naval uniform, who lately stole your stocking, commissions me’—”

“ This is too bad—you’ll make me really angry directly. You are trifling with my best feelings. Give me the inestimable article again.”

“ I had better, for I should find it much more difficult to return than you had to appropriate it. Does that term soothe your delicacy ?”

However, it was at length finally determined that Mr. Underdown should make the best of his way to Jaspar Hall, and taking with him Oliphant’s servant, Peter Drivel, who was sufficiently well known to Miss Belmont, and introducing himself to that young lady, acquaint

her, that, as she was more than eighteen years of age, she had the power of applying to the Lord Chancellor to change her guardian, which request would, as a matter of course, be complied with ; and that Sir Octavius Bacuissart and himself would become trustees for her for the few months that remained until she should be of age. The home of Trestletree Hall was to be offered her, and as great a circle of society as the family could command.

With this proposition, both the Commodore and his nephew eagerly closed, and the expressing of their thanks was unbounded to the proposer. Shortly after, a vessel bound to Plymouth was brought to, in which Mr. Underdown and Peter Drivel placed themselves. Captain Oliphant went on board his frigate, and the whole squadron made sail for its destination.

CHAPTER V.

“ Love’s torch is nowadays like a tallow-candle,
Which, being inverted, quietly goes out,
Therefore, be careful how said torch you handle,
If it t’ extinguish you would set about,
Turn’d topsy-turvy, you would find too late,
It burn’d on still, but burn’d a torch of hate.”

SNIP’S LECTURES ON LOVE.

WHILST the old Commodore, deceived by false intelligence, was seeking the escaped enemy northabout, and, at the same time, astonishing his whole squadron by acts of humanity, and making every ship most efficient by his wisdom, knowledge of all nautical matters, and his great experience, we must revisit Mr. Rubasore. That man has always been a subject of commiseration with me, the sailor author; indeed, I may say, of kindly commiseration.

I once offered him some most excellent counsel; the manner in which he took it certainly did not display so much gratitude as I did eloquence in my peroration.

“Don’t you perceive, my discerning sir,” I once expostulated, “that you positively are a moral scorpion—only ten times worse?” said I, in order to make my lesson the more impressive, and thus render my kindness the more effectual. “The mere existing animal scorpion, when he inserts his sting in his own heart, and thus perishes by his own venom, does not, with the desperation of your folly, heap himself the circle of fire around him. Now you, my dear sir, by your malevolence, by your lancinating remarks, and by every act of provocation, kindle around you a circle of fire. You cannot escape; you have nothing but the fate of the poor scorpion left for you, unless you repent, and that right soon and right earnestly.”

The reader will be surprised when he finds that this well-meant, and, I really think, not

ill-expressed or inapposite rebuke, was very discourteously received.

“Captain Dribble,” said he, “you are a fool—an excrescence, old and disgusting, that ought to be lopped off from the body politic. You are called Captain, and yet never served anybody but yourself in that capacity; a pensioner, a caterpillar, a canker, that does nothing but consume the hard and honest earnings of industry. For the use you are to society, you are totally unfit to live. Pray, sir, what do you do, what have you ever done, for the public bread that you so iniquitously devour?”

Of course, I could not tell *that* man of the wounds that I had received, or of the musket-ball that had passed through my lungs; but I lifted up my eyes, and looked mildly in his face. The sting was in his own heart—in the heart of that man with the evil tongue, whilst a glow of happiness was in mine. His countenance, when he thus vituperated me, had the exact expression of the intense agony of an overflogged

seaman. Yes; I pitied that man even almost unto loving him, yet, from that time forth, I forbore giving him the healthful correction of my good counsel.

At this period of our history, he stood much in need of it. It would have been better for his temporal, perhaps for his eternal, happiness, had he come to me, the retired commander, for advice, instead of repairing to that dark den of all evil, the lawyer's office of Mr. Sharpus.

The initiatory fee for that man of the evil designings was heavy, very heavy, yet he felt not the weight of it then, as he held it in his hand, but he knew how ponderous it was on his breast when, but two short years afterwards, he lay repenting and trembling on his bed of death.

The consultation lasted beyond midnight; the door was locked and doubly bolted, and, in the morning, the sleepy servant found that much wine had been drunk and much spilled. There were many demons in that consultation. He of lust, of avarice, of worldly advantage, and of

ostentation; but methinks that the demon of pride was the loudest, and presided, until the fell spirit that turns the blessing of wine into a liquid fire, usurped the throne of that night of sin. These are the results.

The next day, a complaint, in due official form, was lodged against Captain Oliphant at the Admiralty. Then there was a notice served upon his agent, to notify that a bill in chancery was filed against him, inasmuch, &c. &c.; requiring him to put in an answer on an impossible early day.

But these were matters more of revenge than of use to forward Mr. Rubasore's designs. It was necessary to get possession of the person of Miss Belmont, to seclude her completely from all communication with the world, and, in that seclusion, so to work upon her romance, her false principles, or her terror, that the marriage should take place but a few days after she would have become legally of age.

There was still five months to this period,

more than sufficient time, in the opinion of Mr. Sharpus, to effect all this. However, as it was very certain that his rival was now at sea, and the isolation of Jaspar Hall quite sufficient for the purpose of making his first attempt upon what remained of the false principles of Rosa, Mr. Rubasore took things quietly enough, employing his time principally in seeking the best *artistes* in making up the outward man.

And now a most ridiculous, and, at the same time, a most important point presented itself to his most serious consideration. Miss Rosa had expressed her disgust of his pigtail. Had he sufficient eloquence and seductiveness of manner to overcome, not only her dislike to himself, but to his cue also. It was a nice point; and, perhaps, a fool-hardiness, to create a double task. He would take advice upon it: he repaired to a fashionable peruquier's in St. James's.

This epoch was most important to wiggery. The struggle was going on—was, I should rather say, just then at its height—between the

natural crinous crop and the artificial curls of the toupée. Almost all the young had taken to wear their hair *au naturel*, even almost discarding powder, excepting on very particular occasions. The middle-aged were divided upon this crowning point—the old, of course, adhering—as the old generally do—to their old usages.

Royalty, and all the court, were for wigs—tailed and curtailed, curled more or less, but still wigs only could bask in the regal sunshine. But the young princes had lately worn their own hair, with no other additional ornaments than nature afforded. This innovation was dreadful. Millions of wigged heads were shaken profoundly through this mighty empire. The fraternity of barbers tossed up their hands, each one armed with a powder-puff, in despair; curling-tongs were branded in defiance, and wig-blocks overturned in the heedlessness of dismay.

But the fiat had gone forth, and the majesty of tonsorial domination was shaken to the very centre; from that shock the art of wiggery has

never since recovered. How are the mighty fallen! The perfumer's and the shaving shop have divided the ruins of the empire between them; but the professional dignity of the science is gone for ever. Let his shop be ever so extensive, his goods ever so expensive, or his prices ever so excessive—and they are all these, in all manner of exaggeration, we all know—yet the perfumer is a shopkeeper after all, he is not *professional*. By the innate virtue of science, the barber that shaves well for a penny and cuts hair for twopence, with a considerate half-price for children, is actually more professional than the perfumer of Bond-street, although the latter has his carriage, his country-house, and his family painted on a space of canvass sixteen feet by ten.

Taking counsel only with himself, Mr. Rubasore went forth. Into many an elegant and well-frequented peruquier's did he scrutinizingly peer; he wanted to find a countenance that looked encouragingly, and a shop that was empty. But the fashionable parts of the town

afforded him no such double advantage. At length, he found himself in some unnameable street, that abounded with greengrocers and dusky dealers in coals, charcoal, and oysters, when in season. Here, there was no lack of barbers' shops; the lack was rather in the company that should have filled them. In one of these he discovered a thin, but rather imposing-looking person, just bent, the least in the world, with age—or, more probably, by the habitual stooping of his profession—who was strapping an immense razor upon more than a yard of unctuous looking leather.

Mr. Rubasore felt, at once, that he was standing before no common person. With the graceful ease of a courtier he let fall his strap, made a bow, in which you might read a great deal of courtesy and not one particle of humility, and gently dusting, with a white cambric handkerchief, the seat of his best chair, he tendered it to his visiter.

When Mr. Rubasore ought to have found

himself at ease in the easiest of chairs, he felt himself uncomfortable. There was the white-habited elderly barber standing, not exactly before, but a little on one side, with arms crossed upon his bosom, and his mild eye beaming benevolence upon him, patiently waiting for him to speak; and, though this patience was severely tried, it triumphed.

“I am come,” said Mr. Rubasore—and he made a long pause. The officiator, if space may be compared with time, made a bow equally low.

“You are exceedingly polite to your customers.”

“They are few; and you, sir, are the first to-day—and it is now past twelve o’clock—if, sir, you honour me so far as to intend to become my customer.”

This was said in the sweetest tone possible, and with a strong French accent. Mr. Rubasore looked more attentively at the person before

him, and he could no longer doubt but that he had addressed a gentleman.

“How is it,” he then said, looking round the shop, “that, in so clean and well-appointed a receptacle for customers, so polite and attentive a hair-dresser does not attract?”

“Simply, sir, because I am a foreigner and a refugé. Among the classes that frequent this quarter, to be so is as much a disadvantage as it is, in other quarters, a recommendation.”

“But why the necessity of this business at all? Our government has been liberal to persons of your description.”

“Alas! my good sir, I have, through the too generous disposition of the only remnant of my family, most innocently forfeited their good services. We have been accused of harbouring a spy.”

“And, my good friend,” said Mr. Rubasore eagerly, “was it so?”

“Mon Dieu! could you believe it! He was

a young person, who most unconsciously found himself involved; no man could have been more true to his country. But so intricate were the involvements in which he found himself, so great was his desire of sparing the feelings of a most honourable and distinguished family, that he prefers being an outcast and a wanderer, rather than make those efforts that would, perhaps, justify him to his country."

"His name—pray what is his name?"

"I do not dare tell it. Indeed, I have been but little concerned in his actions; however, he is now safe."

"If he is innocent I am glad of it."

"*Plait-il* that I should do for Monsieur?"

"I really don't know. I rather think that I looked in to admire the extreme nicety of the place, or, perhaps, to ask a question; perhaps impelled by a wish to serve an unfortunate person."

"You do me too much honour. I marvelled at your *entrée*. Your chevelure is tout comme

il faut. I now guess, sir, you are the good physician. You have heard of the illness of ma pauvre Rosalie. I will charge myself with your head for weeks and months, and load myself with gratitude, and, when le bon temps reviendra, I shall show it more."

"Is this Rosalie the lady who assisted the young gentleman to make his escape?"

This question a little startled the Frenchman. He began to suspect, in the respectable-looking Mr. Rubasore, a secret agent of the police; he evidently wanted no assistance from his tonsorial art, was too inquisitive in a general point of view, and had now brought his inquisition home too nearly to be at all pleasant.

After a pause that was painful on the one and very awkward on the other hand, the réfugié crooked himself into a bow that might well be interpreted into a living note of interrogation, which said, as plainly as bow could speak, "What next?" and then the old friseur drew himself solemnly up to his full height, as much as to

say, "I am on my guard." Now, as all this pantomime was no direct answer to Mr. Rubasore's question, he repeated it, but with the addition of an assurance that he asked from no hostile intention, and a solemn asseveration that he was a man of the nicest and the most undoubted honour.

This satisfied the good peruquier: he said frankly that she was. This avowal only increased Mr. Rubasore's desire to see the person who had played so adventurous a part; and this "man of the nicest and most undoubted honour" then said, that he was anxious to relieve the young female, and would be ready to feel her pulse and to prescribe for her, thus deceptively implying that he was a physician.

M. Florentin, for that was the name of the emigré, was grateful. He led the way up a narrow and dark staircase, and, opening the door of the room on the first floor, introduced the *soi-disant* physician at once into the presence of light and loveliness—the latter, alas! how faded.

Mr. Rubasore was, in some measure, inured to the effects of beauty. He had gazed for hours, and fed his soul with the charms of his ward; he had watched every grace in her deportment, chased every dimple and smile across her radiant countenance, and sometimes ventured tremblingly to revel in the dark depths of poetry-surcharged eyes. But there now stood before him a beauty of a totally different description—a beauty to which the heart at once warmed, and for which it ached—a beauty that carried the mind, in spite of itself, away from the joys of earth, and made the beholder think of the resurrection of spirits, and a state of being where that worm, disease, shall find no place.

Rosalie was tall, and, when standing, seemed to stoop. This bend was not natural to her; but partly induced by her continual drooping over her tambour frame, partly from illness, but, more than all this, from that crushing feeling of sinking at the heart, when hope has de-

